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MAY 1995

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- Robotrek
- Dirt Racer SFX
- And loads more...

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LIVE FROM HELL CITY •P26
Capcom's latest commercial ventures

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Super Play

MAY 1995 Issue 31

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SUPER NES & GAMEBOY ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO INC

SUPER PLAY EDITORIAL

FROM THE BIG CHAIR

Our full contents listing starts just over the page

Well, well... It looks like slapped wrists all round for games giants like Nintendo (and Sega), who have been raking in the profits in an extraordinarily big way over the past few years. It seems that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, a governmental body which concerns itself with fair trading, have been investigating goings-on in the games market and have branded them GUILTY! GUILTY of cashing in with inflated pricing policies and GUILTY of manipulating the market. Blimey.

Okay, so you've suspected all along that you've been paying over the odds for new games, so nothing new there. But, rest assured, now that the government have finally seen the light, the cart wars are only just beginning. Over the next three months, the government will be discussing what action to take.

With any luck this will mean that the prices of games cartridges will fall. New games, some of which come with exorbitant price tags these days, will be within easier reach of everyone. Which is excellent news for all SNES owners.

As for *Super Play* this month, I think we've put together a great issue. Watch out for our Metal Gear theme running throughout the issue, which includes exclusive reviews of the rather unique *Front Mission* and *Super Turrican 2* – a top blast-frenzy.

Just one final thought. Do we *really* need another *Street Fighter* game? Someone seems to think so. A brand new *Street Fighter* game has snuck into the arcades in Japan. Is it Super, is it Turbo? No, it goes by the name of *Zero*. Turn to page 10 to read all about it.

We hope you like this month's free postcards too. So many of you ask for Wil's artwork that we thought this was the best way to keep you happy...

See you next month.

Alison Harper
Editor

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY
ABC: 37,747*
* Super Play's circulation – THAT'S ACTUALLY AN INCREASE, FACT FANS

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As part of our Metal Gear theme, we look at the *Gundam* saga. And it makes EastEnders look tame.

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The final instalment in our A to Z of every cart ever produced for the SNES.

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A phenomenal response to this fact-filled, info-packed page means that next month, it will be two pages big!

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What exclusive things have we in store for you next month? This is the page to turn to.

IRRESPONSIBLE PICTURES ...76

This month sees a wide range of new video releases – from the romantic *Oh My Goddess!* to the medieval ninja romp Ninja Scroll, and we've forced ourselves to sit at home in front of the video to let you know what they're like. As well as all the latest Manga news, there's the chance to win every video in the *Oh My Goddess!* series.

UK & IMPORT GAME REVIEWS

UK & IMPORT GAME REVIEWS index

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Elite's new racer is the latest game to boast an FX chip. *Super Play* takes a gamble and decides whether an extra chip is anything to shout about…

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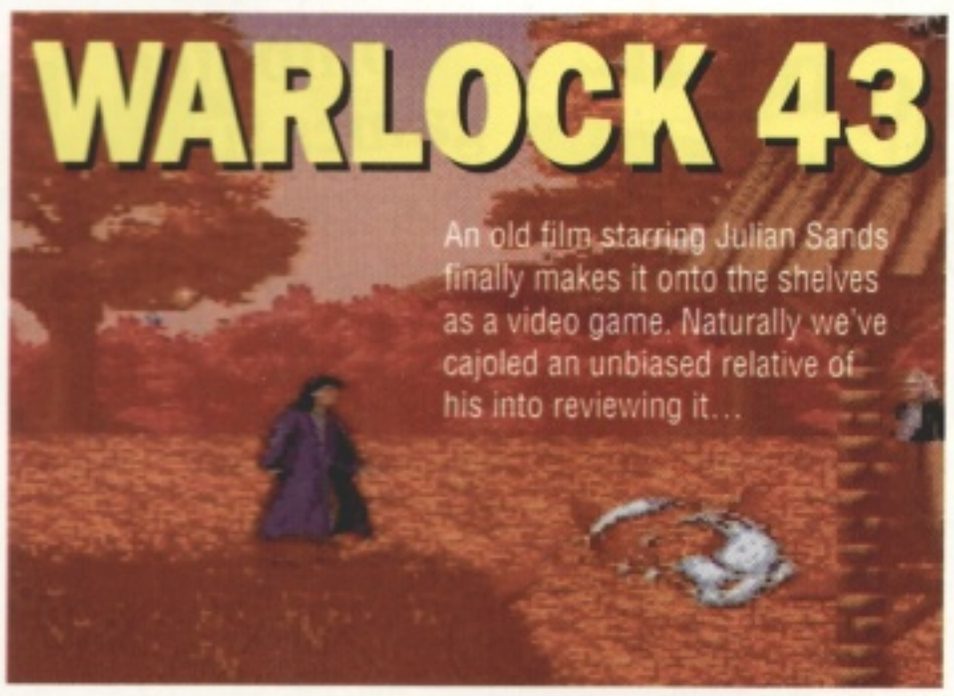
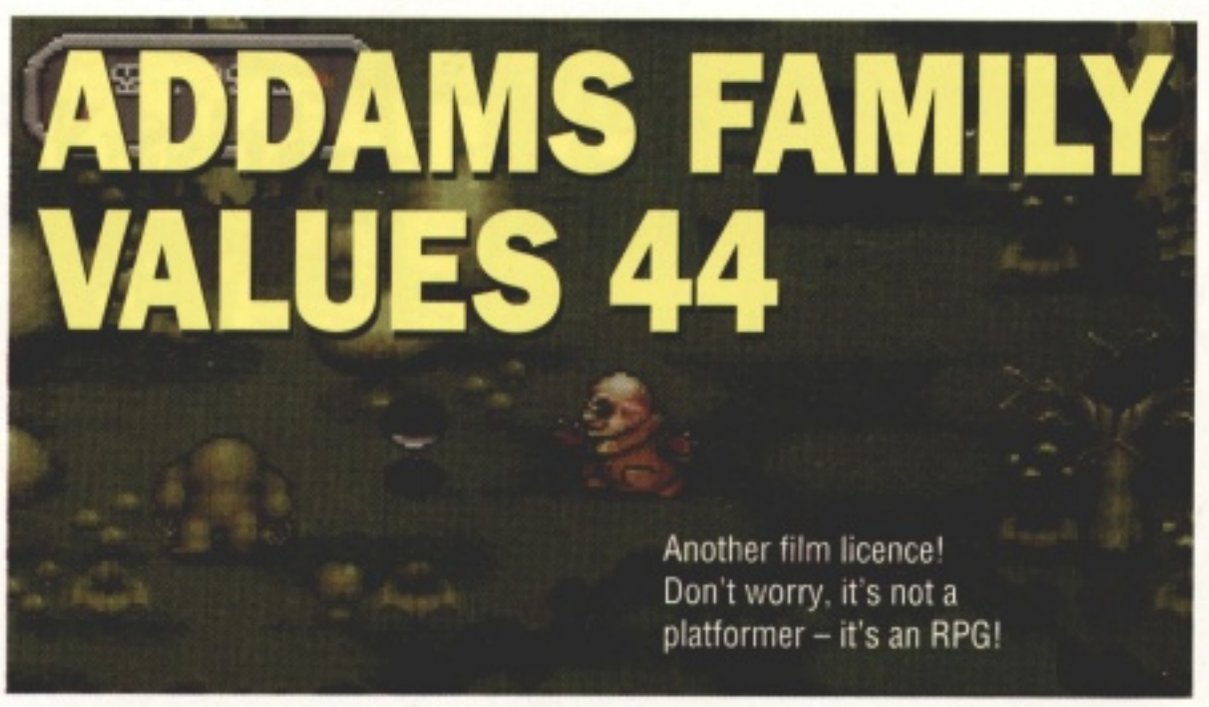


WARLOCK 43

An old film starring Julian Sands finally makes it onto the shelves as a video game. Naturally we've cajoled an unbiased relative of his into reviewing it...

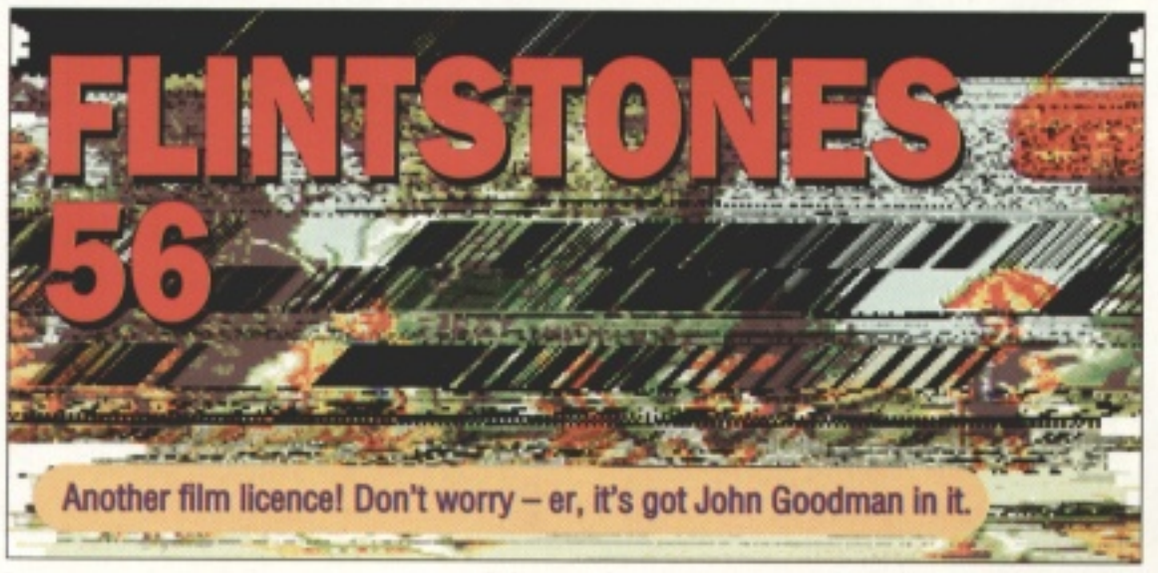


ADDAMS FAMILY VALUES 44

Another film licence! Don't worry, it's not a platformer – it's an RPG!

Another RPG! Don't worry. At least, it's not a film licence. Strange how these captions work out sometimes...

ROBOTREK 55



SUPER

NEWS NETWORK SUPER NINTENDO NEWS NETWORK SUPER NINTENDO

Extortionate pricing policies? The standalone Super Nintendo Entertainment System currently sells for around £69.99...

...which, coincidentally, was the price originally suggested for a single cartridge of *Donkey Kong Country*. Pressure from the high street stores forced Nintendo to rethink, however.

YOU'VE BEEN RIPPED OFF!

THIS MONTH IN SUPER EXPRESS

Nintendo's been ripping you off – official. The Street Fighter saga continues. And another Ultra 64 developer is announced.

Nintendo UK has been found guilty of excessive pricing and sharp practice in a report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, an official body which investigates fair trading in business. Both Nintendo and Sega Europe have been accused of operating monopolies in a software market worth some £550 million a year. As a result of the MMC's report, Nintendo could find price restrictions imposed on all its Super NES games by the British Government.

The report is the result of a 14-month inquiry into the games industry. It claims the companies have been

You're not playing fair on prices

MMC sparks video battle

BY MATHEW HORSMAN

A price war is poised to break out between the two giants of the UK video games market, and

found to have set prices to earn higher margins on software than on hardware. This makes it harder for new entrants to the market to compete, since their hardware costs of entry are

Computer games firms face curbs for price fixing

By Edward Gorman

The world's largest computer

ISSUE 31 MAY 1995

SUPER PLAY PROFILES

This month, in keeping with our Metal Gear theme, we decided to actually try on some of our favourite robot outfits for a day. Here's what happened...

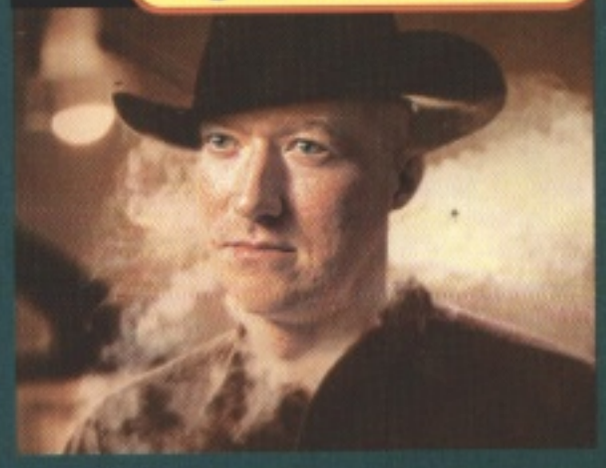
Alison Harper

I'm being:
Twikie from Buck Rogers
And my problem is:
Who's idea was this, Ollie?
I spent the day:
Looking more like an extra from the Wizard of Oz

Ollie Alderton

I'm being:
The heroic Gigantor
And my problem is:
Life's tough when you're a space-age weapon
I spent the day:
Getting asked whether I was a bird or a plane, for some reason...

Zy Nicholson



I'm being:
Cool Yul robot from Westworld
And my problem is:
Time flies by when you're the driver of a train
I spent the day:
Letting off steam

EXPRESS

THIRD PARTIES

Nintendo also came under fire for its treatment of other companies who wished to write and produce SNES games. In essence, the report accused Nintendo of making it unnecessarily difficult for third-party developers and publishers (such as Sensible, Bullfrog, Sony, Virgin and so on) to release their games on the SNES. In particular, the Commission criticised the following points of Nintendo's business practice:

- Limiting the number of games produced for the SNES by other companies.
- Forcing every developer to submit games for testing and vetting. No game can be granted a release until it receives the infamous Seal Of Quality, an award decided solely, arbitrarily, and in some cases mysteriously (naming no Robots), by Nintendo.
- Having the power to veto the content of the software. Nintendo censorship was most evident in games like *Mortal Kombat*, *Wolfenstein 3D* and *Syndicate*.
- Controlling the packaging and presentation of all game carts. See last month's Playback for the Great Plastic Box Debate.

"conducting their affairs so as to prevent, restrict or distort competition", and contains a range of criticisms referring to all aspects of Nintendo UK's business practices.

Most importantly, the Commission agreed with the long-standing complaint that SNES carts are too expensive. By keeping its games at an artificially high price, Nintendo could afford to sell the basic SNES console for little or no profit. Through this method it could increase its potential market of customers who relied entirely on Nintendo for new games. "This discriminatory pricing raises the total cost of game play and inhibits the entry of new systems," claims the report.

Company policies on games rental also came under attack. The Commission ruled that existing restrictions were against the public interest because they did not allow consumers to test games before making an "informed purchase".

These claims are levelled against the UK branches of Nintendo and Sega only. The MMC said that prices were "substantially" higher in the UK than in other countries, although it is making its report available to fair trading authorities in the United States and Japan.

Unsurprisingly, Nintendo UK denied the claim that the pricing of its games had been either excessive or against the public interest.

While you've been forking it out big time for games like these, the games giants have been raking it in.

DAILY EXPRESS Friday March 10 1995 7

NEWS

Games giants guilty of rip-off

By PAUL CROSSIE
Consumer Editor

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Nintendo

COMPUTER giants Sega and Nintendo were accused ... UK now have TV-linked consoles or hand-held Game ... games more widely available to shops. The commission's 255-page ... the two ... anyone wanting to sell Sega and Nintendo equipment and technical features were built into products which made it "very difficult to produce software that can be played on their machines". The inquiry was ordered by the Director General of Fair Trading and took 14 months to

SUPER PLAY COMMENT

Whilst we welcome the MMC's report, we can't help wondering why it has taken them over 14 months to conclude what every games player in the country has known all along – that cartridges are too expensive.

Don't believe for a second that it's all over. A three-month consultation period will follow, during which time the Government will discuss the problem with the games industry, before any positive action is taken.

Will the price of cartridges then fall considerably? Although Nintendo's profit margins will be reduced, the slack will be taken up slightly when a fairer deal is extended to third party publishers. The overall reduction may be slightly less than the 20% demanded by industry watchdogs.

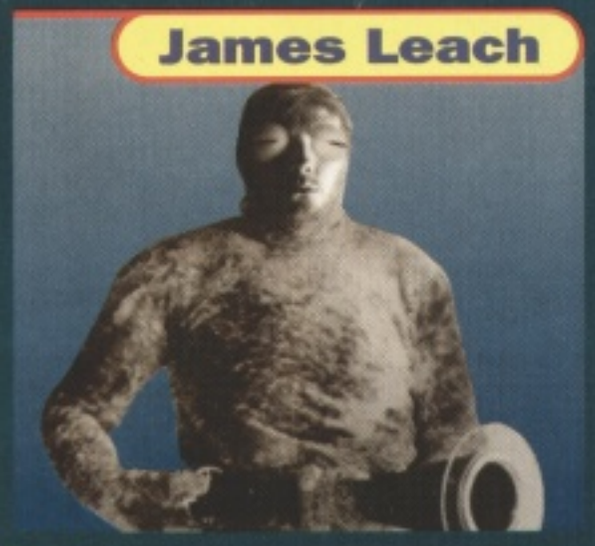
Nevertheless, we're confident that the move will provide a welcome boost to the SNES market. The more affordable the game, the more it will sell.

As ever, *Super Play* advises SNES owners to shop around for the best prices. It's still possible to build up a considerable library of quality games without spending more than £20-£30 on any one cart.

Wil Overton

I'm being:
That little Gundam chappie
And my problem is:
This goddam gundam gun, I can hardly lift it off the ground
I spent the day:
Looking like I'd escaped from LegoLand

James Leach



I'm being:
A robotic Invader from Mars
And my problem is:
I suspect something fishy is going on
I spent the day:
Avoiding people wanting to wrap me in newspaper with a load of cold chips

You may have noticed that lovely Debs is no longer here. That's because she's been kidnapped by the Total! team and forced to be their Dep Ed. The fiends.

STREET FIGHTER

The wonder years?

Capcom • Arcade

A youthful Ken, with pongtail.

Brace yourselves for the news: there's another Street Fighter arcade game on its way from Japan. Super Play investigates...

Nash (left): Guile on steroids?

The working title of *Street Fighter Zero* may have given you a clue to the game's basis: it's a prequel, set before the very first *Street Fighter* game that was released way back in 1987. All of the characters are younger and leaner, although you won't have any trouble recognising them from their fighting tactics.

New characters crop up too: one of them is Nash, a large GI who fights like Guile. Those of you familiar with 'SF1' may also recognise Birdie and Adon.

We half suspected that Capcom of Japan was having a little April fool's joke at our expense, but these pictures proved us wrong. However, we're still not sure if *SF Zero* is intended for mass market release. Japan's Makuhari Messe venue was recently host to the AOU, a major arcade trade show where the coin-op companies preview their forthcoming attractions. *SF Zero* was nowhere to be seen, with little more than a press pack to herald its arrival. Suspecting that it's still being tweaked and fine-tuned by Capcom R&D, we'll leave you with these shots.

As you peruse them, you'll probably have to ask yourself the inevitable question: has the *Street Fighter* saga had its day? Capcom clearly thinks not, as a new TV series based on the World Warriors starts on April 17th. Every Monday at 7pm, Japanese viewers will be able to tune into a half-hour *SF2* anime directed by Kizaburo Sugii. Beats East Enders hands down, eh?

Although *Captain Commando* is on its way for the Super Famicom, it remains to be seen if 16-bit versions of *SF Zero* and *Dark Stalkers* are on the cards. Given that Capcom has a long-standing record of overdue arcade conversions for the SNES, we're remaining confident in the absence of a firm confirmation.

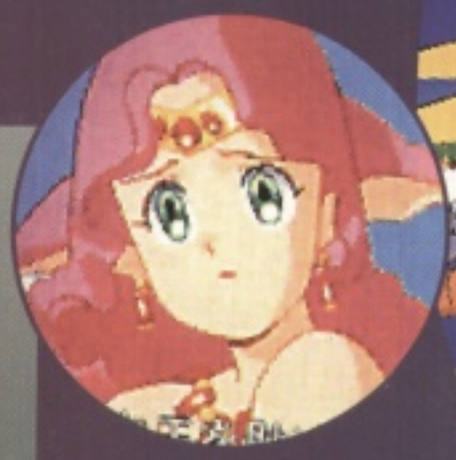
Chun Li, minus boots, fights Ryu on her own stage – the Great Wall of China.

TWINBEE YAHOO!

Konami's *Pop'n Twinbee*, renamed *Bells & Whistles* in the arcades over here, remains one of the most outrageously cute coin-op conversions that the SNES has ever seen. So it's with some interest that we'll be following the progress of *Twinbee Yahoo! – Roaming Around The Wonder Land...*

A new shoot-'em-up from the trusty Japanese game wizards, *Twinbee Yahoo!* has a rather silly plot involving Princess Melody of Fantastic Land (somewhere north of Donburi Island, we're told) having her Happy Harp stolen by Grand Duke Nonsense and General Wonder. Although some of the power-ups have changed to encourage simultaneous two-player action, there's nothing that couldn't be easily converted to the Super Nintendo. Encouragingly, Konami's recent *Ultimate Parodius* conversion to SNES was easily on a par with that on the Sony Playstation, so a Super Famicom version of *Twinbee Yahoo!* seems equally likely. Ya, as you so rightly say, hoo.

Konami's traditionally busy promo art shows a giant Melody smiling with wicked abandon as Twinbee & Winbee plummet from 5,000 ft..



Above: in the intro sequence, a fairy named Flute engages the help of Twinbee & Winbee in freeing Wonder Land .

BIZARRELY

...*Twinbee Yahoo*'s musical score borrows the opening theme tune from *Twinbee Paradise 2*, a Japanese radio programme for young children which follows the adventures of the Twinbee characters. The song itself is performed by Mariko, a famous anime voice actress. The Japanese become very attached to their game characters, so it's not surprising to see them crop up in other forms of popular culture.

ZERO

'Sweatbands... stuck... with... superglue... can't... move... hands...' The classic *Street Fighter* screenshot pose.

Note how the backdrops feature a greater level of depth and detail, like this Japanese city street (right).

A new gauge sits at the bottom of the screen, but not for Super Moves. Maybe special moves are rationed?

Old characters revamped: but how many of the *SF2* characters will make it in?

A reasonable similarity to the original Joe's Garage stage, no?

Twinbee Yahoo! still features the dual plane effect requiring the player to distinguish ground-based enemies (dispatched with bombs)....

... and tall or airborne foes, who can only be shot down. Enormous screen-filling bosses round off every level.

ART LESSON No.1

The graphics in *Street Fighter Zero* have been completely restylised by the same artist behind *Dark Stalkers* and that most recent addition to the *SF* mythos, Akuma.

Thick black outlines and bold shading lend *SF Zero* a slightly cartoonish, more defined look. With the release of *Dark Stalkers II: Vampire's Revenge* – also previewed at the AOU – it seems as though Capcom has settled upon a favoured visual style for its fighting games.

An uninformed vamp from *Dark Stalkers II* is mocked as he discovers the static death horror of running across newly-fitted nylon carpets.

In just a short time, *Dark Stalkers* has built up an immense following in Japan. A Super Famicom version is a very real possibility.

Where, oh where, has our dear Putty got to?

On his travels Putty seeks shelter from a gang of moustachioed layabouts in a Bhuddist temple.

Right: Putty sports an alarming trunk.

PUTTY SQUAD

System 3 • 12 Mbit

Criminally, System 3 have dropped the Game Over laugh sampled from Tex Avery's disowned 1944 cartoon Screwball Squirrel in converting *Putty Squad* to the SNES. Fortunate, then, that this blip aside, *Putty Squad* looks to be exactly as terrific as its Amiga parent. An extremely silly platform game that swats aside the bluebottle of technical impressiveness in favour of the minnow-filled jam jar of fun, *Putty Squad* has as its plot a burlesque of *Apocalypse Now* featuring a gullible rubber-stomached cat as your associate, and that's the most sensible thing about it.

In each of the 60 levels, Putty must rescue fellow putties abandoned as 'missing in action' by the wartime government, combating enemy troops with the aid of disguise kits, the astonishing ability to absorb hapless enemies and take on their forms and powers, dramatically powerful bombs and DJ Uncle Ted, a character from the original Putty who has sold his Hammond organ to buy a record deck. Tokens upgrade Putty's excretory punches to various strengths of firepower, and a prized power-up calls forth an armoured balloon to the strains of Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*. Remarkably it all hangs together very well, with the immaculate presentation concealing a superior platformer. Effortlessly mixing typical genre tricks such as lifts and collectable objects with new cunningness like Putty's pliability allowing him to stretch across seemingly unpassable gaps, *Putty Squad* is entertaining. Review next month, when, Hindenberg-proportioned disasters aside, it should have a huggishly warm welcome.

JAMES POND 3
OPERATION STARFISH

US Gold • 12 Mbit

US Gold reckon James Pond is a "highly recognisable character" and they are correct in touting his inability to be mistaken for, say, famous American palaeoanthropologist Donald Carl Johanson on the grounds of Don not being a fish and all. But anyway. *Op Starfish* is Pond's first proper outing on the SNES (the hashed *Crazy Sports* compendium forgotten by sensible people everywhere) and it is large.

A mix-it-up platform game with speed bits, puzzle bits, keep-up-with-the-scrolling bits, running-at-odd-angles-around-the-screen bits and, er, 'other' bits, it was received with varying degrees of interest in its computer incarnation. Hailed in some quarters as the greatest platform game ever (the sheer size of the game and variety of things to do airlift it effortlessly out of the genre's rugby scrimmage for survival), others pointed out its catalogue of platform crimes (among them leaps of faith, unspottable traps, stop-start 'feel' to the levels and unsettlingly unmoving backgrounds so you hadn't a clue how far or in which direction you were falling).

Above: a right nana.

US Gold have had plenty time to sort out the problems, so let us therefore predict with confidence that *Op Starfish*'s cheese and custard fixation, swamping enormity, zippiness, plethora of power-ups, shameless looting of the good bits from every platformer ever and (hey hey) 'visual jokes' will be good. Oh yes. Next month? Probably.

Pond goes crazy with a Granny Smith gun.

Rocket from one of these holes.

Pond, looking not unlike Mr Motivator.

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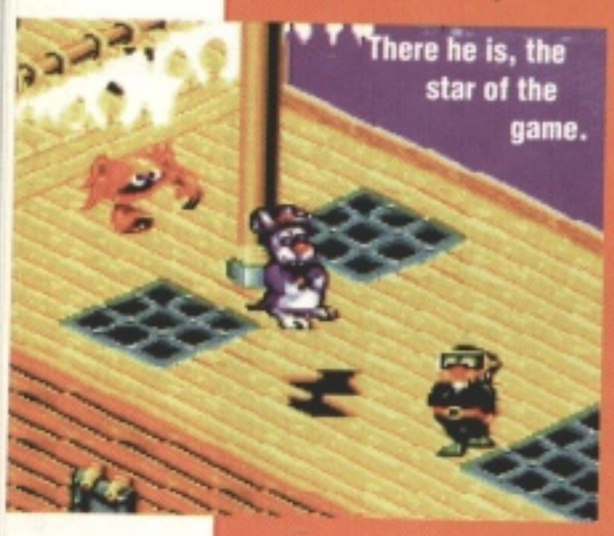
WHIZZ

Titus • 8 Mbit

Isometric 3D is a Good Thing, as *Equinox* easily proved without the need for an exciting last-minute dash to the courtroom with new evidence by Perry Mason's young assistant. *Whizz* is in a similar style, but with the emphasis on running around rather than solving puzzles.

It's all a bit platformy, actually, though the neat perspective helps it be a bit 'different'. Levels are played against the clock, with monsters defeated by 'spinning' them to death. You have, of course, only a limited amount of 'spin' power. Titus clearly feel that gamesters have had it far too easy, for *Whizz* is phenomenally difficult. Not only are the time limits uncompromisingly strict, but unkillable monsters and slow-acting poison mushrooms are scattered about to annoy the heck out of your (somewhat sinister) White Rabbit. Dare to stray from the shortest path to the exit and you'll most likely die, but (naturally) this is the only way to find the vital secret bonuses.

It looks fabulous, especially the Alice in Wonderland toy room, and it's refreshing to see a game based solely on wiping everyone else off the high score table. We await its arrival with interest.



Rabbits prove to be the hardiest of animals. here, our bunny braves out life in the deep freeze.

Look at these grumpy eggs. Although, if you only had one leg, you'd probably look like that too. So they're excused.

The levels are amazingly colourful. This is the toy room, all appropriately themed too!

There's nothing more satisfying than kicking down a sandcastle on the beach, especially if someone else has spent hours building it.

OSCAR

Titus • 8 Mbit

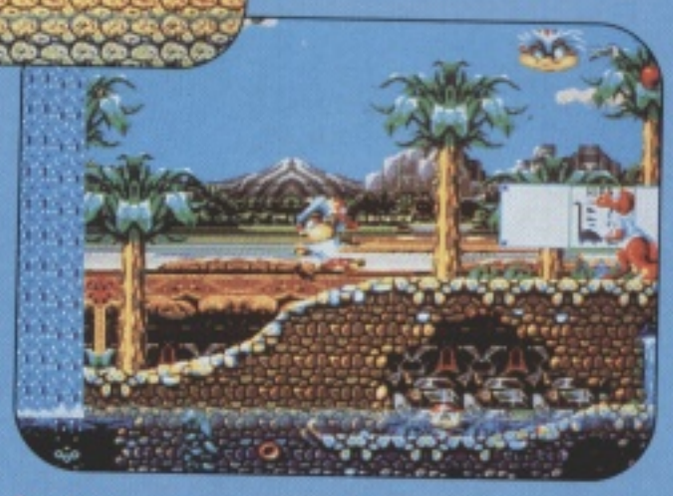
Hnnghh. For every *Putty Squad* doing its darnedest to liposuction the lazy fat from the platform game, there's an *Oscar* gobbling down sticky doughnuts to put it straight back on again. The chipmunkish pixie of the title has to rush around seven film-themed worlds collecting (yock) Oscars, jumping on monsters' heads and using a yo-yo to break down walls.

The levels are ample and manifold, all the monsters have a tremendous amount of character, Oscar himself performs an Edinburgh fringe festival of leave-the-joypad-alone routines, and the graphics are impeccable. It is, in short, identical to any one of 16 platformers you could name off the top of your head.

Now, hey, it's not our place to damn it for that (and certainly not without having seen the game proper – a couple of screenshots and an afternoon with the computer versions do not an in-depth examination make) and, if done properly, these things do tend to be dependably acceptable in an unremarkable sort of *Bubsy the Bobcat* way. But *Oscar* had better have something better to offer if it wants to survive in the harsh, savage world of cute platform games. They'd have your throat open with a straight razor as soon as look at you, they really would.

An Oscar – a bizarre creature of the chipmunk family? Maybe Terry Nutkins knows?

An Oscar – backslappy showbizzy type of award, which no-one wants Hugh Grant to win.



Gotcha Oscar – even more irritating than the real thing. Involves Noel Edmonds and Mr Blobby.

THE CART'S IN THE POST

Remember that reader survey we asked you to fill in back in the February issue, well, we've finally got around to sorting through them. And here are the lucky people who got their names pulled out of the enormous cardboard box that we chucked all the entries into.

Mr G. Broomhead (!) of Rotherham, you've won a copy of *Charles Barkley Shut Up and Jam!* And so has Mr G. Joyes from Islesworth. *Brett Hull Hockey* goes to Philip Ebborn of Harrisenhead. *Micro Machines* is whizzing its way to Miss S. Easton in Harrogate. Dominic Byrne of Wirral will be disappearing into the *Vortex* (ahem). And Jared Jedynowicz (try typing that with a sarnie in one hand) from Abingdon is now the proud owner of *Troy Aikman Football*. Hurrah! Robert Burrell wins *Legend*. Well done, pal! And finally, Señor Jose Javier Martin Vega, as if he's not spoilt enough already by living in the Canary Isles, is getting *Jurassic Park 2*, sent by express carrier budgie, to Las Palmas. Arriba!

BOOGERMAN

Interplay • 24Mbits

Boogers on the SNES. It's just snot funny, is it, the way those green journalists pick and flick their way through some of the oldest puns in the book to introduce a preview on *Boogerman*. But who nose, maybe it will hit the target this time.

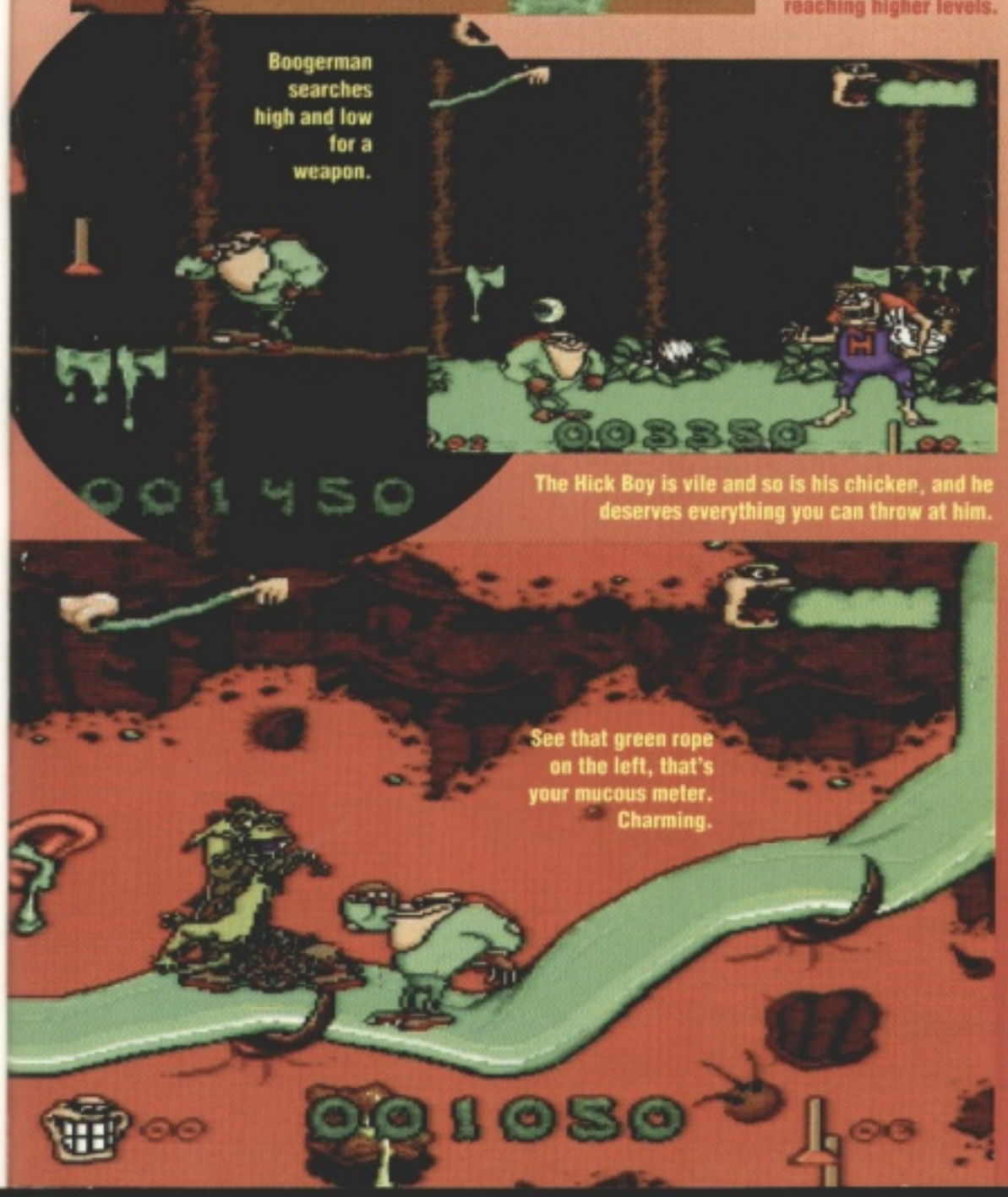
Interplay have very kindly blown us (sorry) these chips and who are we to turn our nose up at nasal cavity humour. Anyway, we often talk of snotty platform games here at *Super Play* and this one is, literally. Haw, haw. With more bogey gags than you could ram up Ian Rush's hooter, *Boogerman* promises to fulfill the dreams of everyone who's wanted a snot-slinging sim.

What an idea. Okay it's a platformer with a superhero who's not super, but booger. Everything you've never wanted in a platformer is there, from ignitable fart boosters to a variety of mucous attacks. Which is all very pleasant. You slime your way around suitably hilariously entitled levels, like the Flatulent Swamps and do battle with horrid things like the Hick Boy and Deodor Ant. Lovely.

At the start of the game you go straight down your choice of toilet – make of that what you will – so you can use passwords or start at the beginning. From there, you'll need to develop your skills of loogie lobbing, burping and farting and other such niceties to overcome the baddies. On the way, as is customary in the world of platformers, you must collect various stuff such as plungers (eh?), chilli powder (helps gas attacks, obviously) and red capes (to get a sort of super power).

What more could you want, eh? Will the humour wear thin? Can smut cover up the fatal flaws of your average platformer? This and other philosophical conundrums will be chewed over as soon as we get a finished version of *Boogerman* for review. And we promise not to indulge in any more of these childish attempts at booger humour.

You'd think it might burn your bot, but fart power is the key to reaching higher levels.


Boogerman searches high and low for a weapon.
003350
001450
The Hick Boy is vile and so is his chicken, and he deserves everything you can throw at him.
See that green rope on the left, that's your mucous meter. Charming.
001050

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REALM
Titus ● 8 meg

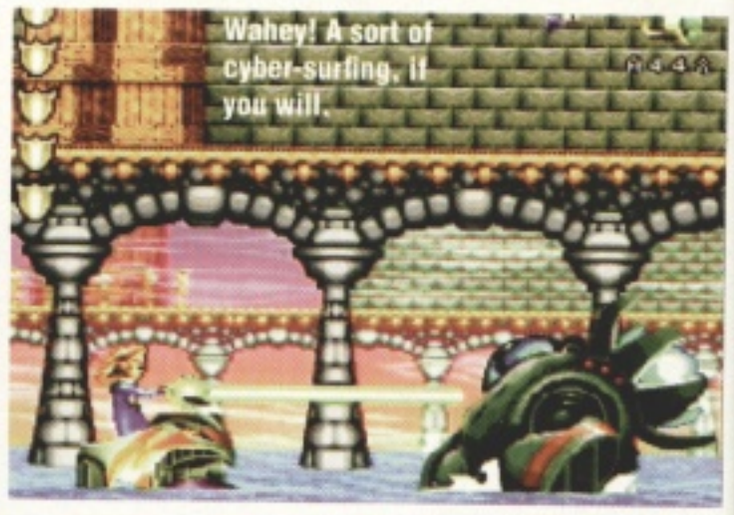
The French, as it is well known, are slightly 'odd'. It was, after all, two French fellows who came up with the Astérix books despite the conceptual absence of punnery from the language, and, who in the 14th century court of King Louis the Quarrelsome could fail to comment on the 'strangeness' of Pipkin Fandango's child-in-a-basket comedy tapdance routine? This tradition of 'eccentricity' continues with *Realm*, a decidedly French take on the *Turrican* series.

Billed as (but clearly not) a 'cyberpunk' game, *Realm* enlivens predictable scenes of robot suitery and giant laserment with 'odd' touches such as being compelled to run if you want to fire diagonally upwards.

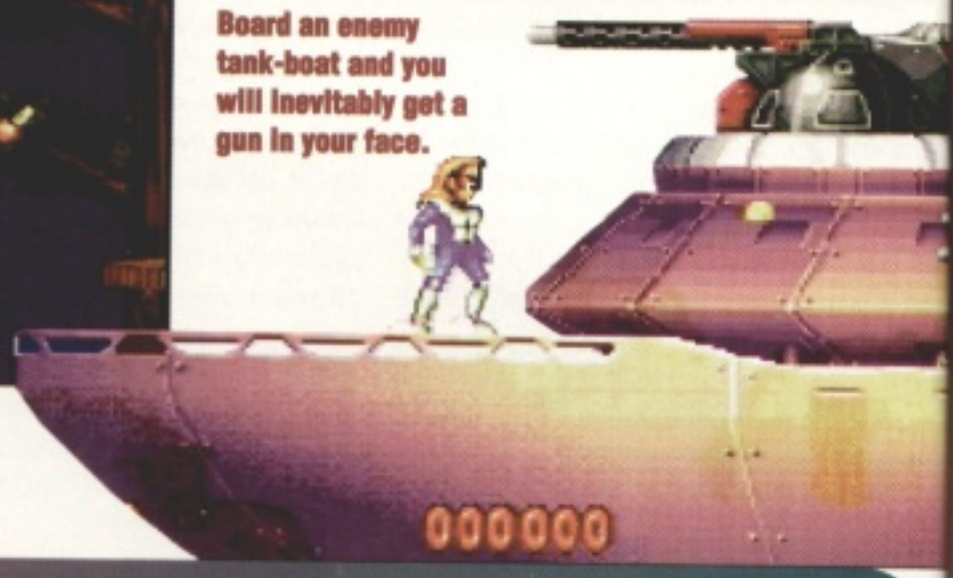
Mere 'oddness' cannot, of course, be expected to carry the game. To assist in saving the universe (or whatever) your (ah) 'unusually' androgynous character employs an unimaginative but authoritative range of cataclysmically dangerous weapons, including heat-seeking missiles, *Road Warrior*-ish boomerangs and extraordinarily large guns. For their part, the sinister oppressors command some of the most ludicrously overbearing machines seen outside, well, *Turrican 2*. Count the five enormous worlds, compliment the multi-directional scrolling and wallow in the 'curious' Frenchness of it all when we review *Realm* upon its 'realmlease' (o-ho) in June.

Here we witness an incredible mobile suit and two rather despicable hair-dos.

We've been told that you can shoot 'omni-directionally' in *Realm*. That must be one of them there omni-directions, then. Or upwards, as we mere mortals call it.



Evil tree monsters lurking about. Those French game designers, eh? Must be all that garlic they eat in their croissants.



SOMETHING DISHY GOING ON

A while ago, we ran a competition with Sony who donated a lovely satellite system and loads of *Jurassic Park* stuff. And now, we are pleased to announce that there's one very happy person living in Scotland who is completely kitted out with a new satellite set-up. Congrats, Lynsey Paterson.

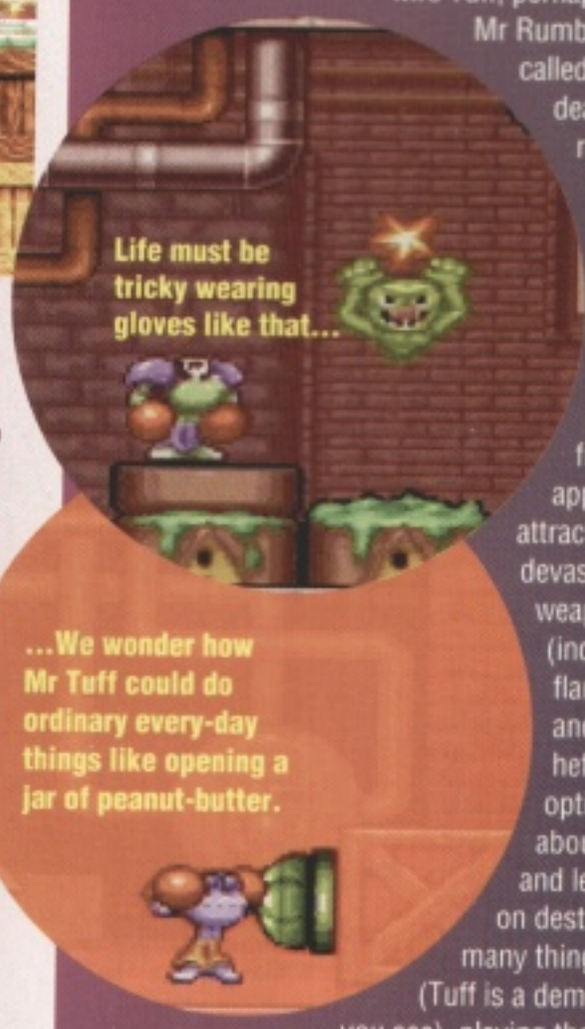
Pablo Aperador Prada (from Alicante), Adam Bentle (from not-quite-so-exotic Pickering), Asif Khan (from London), Stephen Oliver (of Hartlepool) and J. Licchelli (based in Redditch) all came close to winning. Fortunately, they can console themselves with the fact that they have copies of *Jurassic Park 2* in the post, as well as other assorted items of *Jurassic Park* attire to wear with pride and be the envy of all their friends.

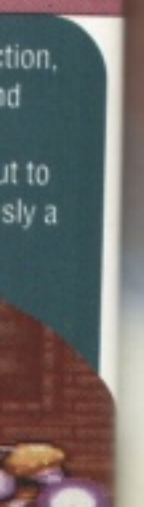
MR TUFF
Ocean ● 12 meg

No, listen. There's a takey-turny two-player mode in this platform game, right? And one player is clearly *Mr Tuff*. So what's his companion called? Mrs Tuff, perhaps? (Cleverly) Mr Rumble? No. He is called Mr Firm. Oh dear. A phrase, regrettably, apparently applicable to the game as a whole.

After going out of its way to be friendly and appealing, with attractively devastating weapons (including flamethrowers and chainsaws), hefty vehicles, optional just-about-everything and levels centred on destroying as many things as possible (Tuff is a demolition robot, you see), playing the preview cart left us feeling decidedly washed-out. Perhaps it is the lacklustre level design (traps are heavily signposted, and there are no gleefully underhand surprises), or the reprehensible way that monsters appear from behind you when you know you've just cleared out that section, but Mr Tuff has so far proved blandly dispiriting. And why no simultaneous two-player mode?

Still. We've clearly only just invited the game out to the cinema on a pioneering date, and there's obviously a way to go before we marry and die in poverty at the age of 86. In fairness *Mr Tuff* could easily improve greatly with the introduction of the vehicles proper (so far we've only had a go on the wrecking crane; later on there are surfboard races, submarine sections and a bit with a tank), and we do like the idea of searching through the levels for things to knock down. Let us hope the uninteresting beginning is merely a crafty ploy, eh?


Life must be tricky wearing gloves like that...
...We wonder how Mr Tuff could do ordinary every-day things like opening a jar of peanut-butter.



Life's never easy when you're going out with a goddess!

Oh My Goddess!

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NINTENDO'S SOFT MACHINE

Whilst hard facts about the Ultra 64 continue to evade even those supposedly involved in developing for it, there are plenty of dedicated people working away at something. This month Nintendo named another trio of hopefuls eager to join the Next Generation.

MIYAMOTO AND ANGEL (OF 'GABRIEL' FAME) JOIN FORCES

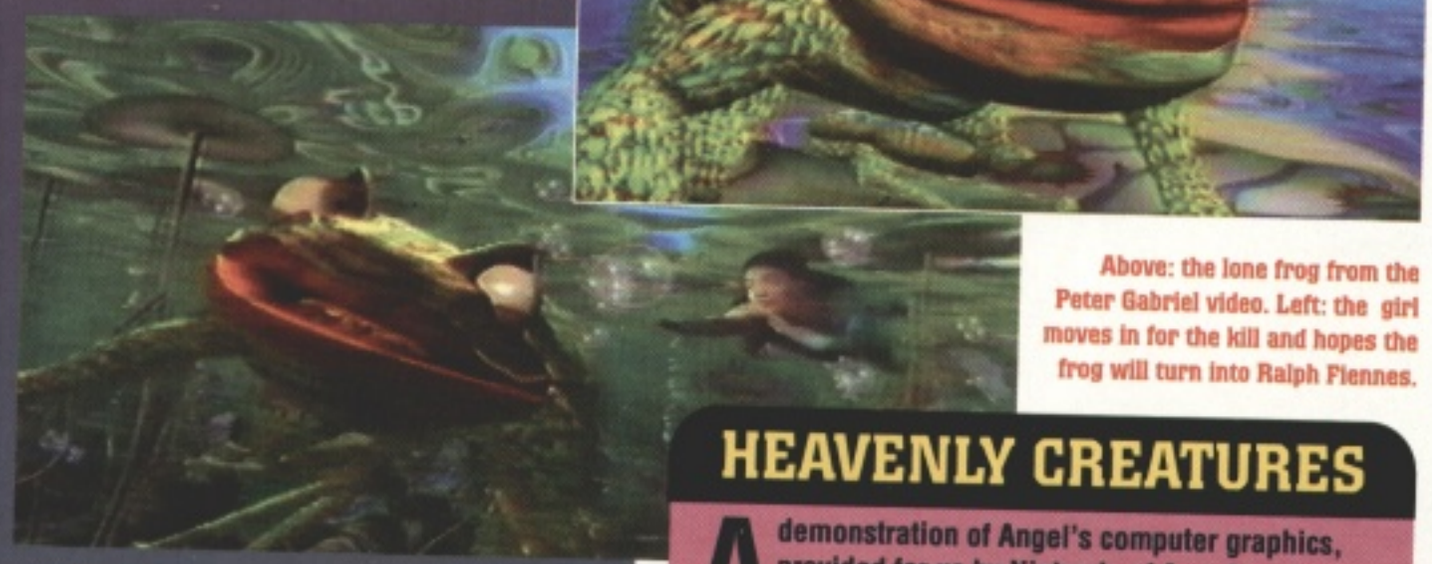
We knew that Shigeru Miyamoto, the man behind the *Mario* and *Zelda* games, was working on something 'special' for the Ultra 64; now, at last, the details are beginning to emerge.

Nintendo of America has announced a development agreement with Angel Studios, an award-winning company specialising in computer graphics. Based in California, Angel is a pioneer in interactive software and virtual reality. It has also worked on VR sequences for the Hollywood movie *The Lawnmower Man*, and is behind the complex animation of Peter Gabriel's music vid *Kiss That Frog*.

It's also been revealed that Angel Studios is currently engaged in a collaboration with a Nintendo creative team led by Shigs Miyamoto. No working title has been given for the project, but the creation of a real-time 3D world has already begun.

'We've waited patiently to enter the video game industry until a vehicle was developed that allowed us to fully display our talents – Nintendo Ultra 64 is that vehicle.' said Diego Angel, the unlikely-named chief executive and founder of Angel Studios. 'The creative energy being committed to this game by the staff at Angel studios, coupled with the capability to render 'on-the-fly' in real-time as built into the powerful Nintendo Ultra 64 system, will produce a video game for Nintendo Ultra 64 unmatched in its graphical quality and interactive game play enjoyment'.

Although the nature of the game is still a mystery, NoA Chairman Howard Lincoln thought that Angel's talents 'in music videos, motion pictures and commercials will transfer nicely to the video game industry'. Er, still no clues there, then.

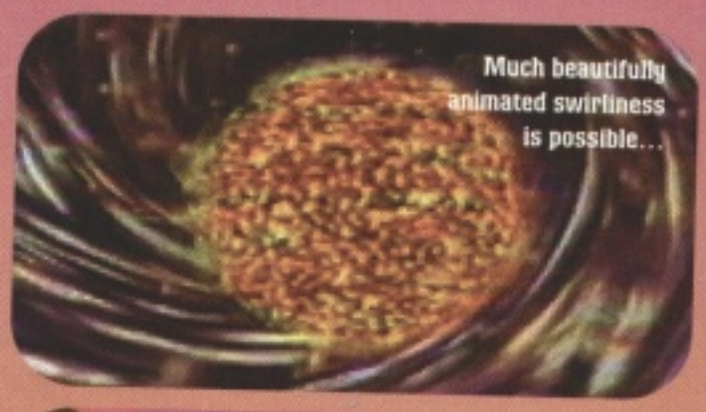


Above: the lone frog from the Peter Gabriel video. Left: the girl moves in for the kill and hopes the frog will turn into Ralph Fiennes.

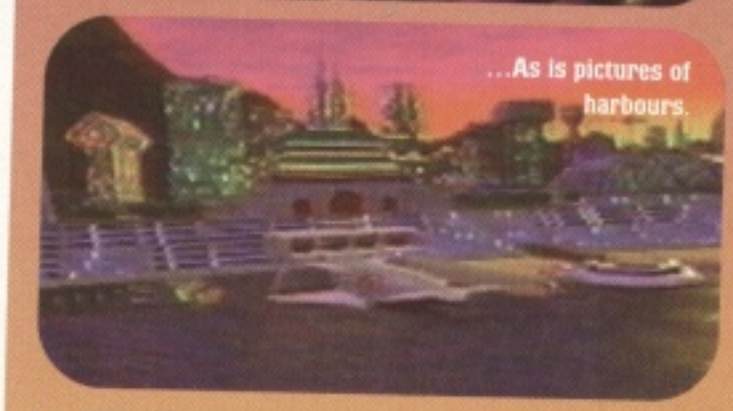
But seriously, imagine having graphics like these in a video game. It'd be brilliant...

HEAVENLY CREATURES

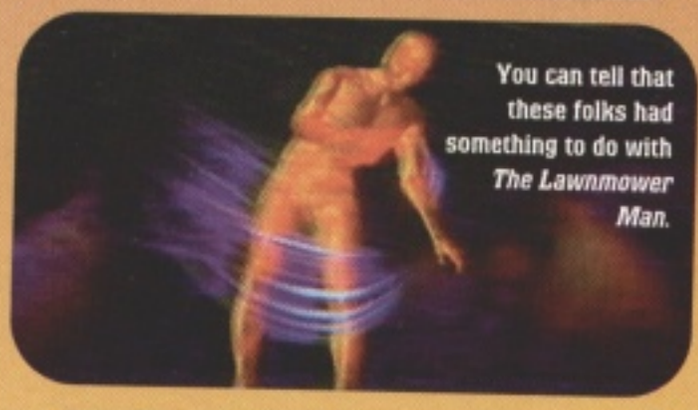
A demonstration of Angel's computer graphics, provided for us by Nintendo of America, revealed some rather splendid animations. As ever, it was suggested that the Ultra 64 would be able to reproduce these effects.



Much beautifully animated swirliness is possible...



...As is pictures of harbours.



You can tell that these folks had something to do with *The Lawnmower Man*.

Now this is nice. Yes, I'd hang this on my wall.

BLAZING SKIES

Sierra On-Line, a games developer more commonly associated with CD-ROM titles, has struck a deal with Nintendo to convert one its most popular titles for the Ultra 64.

"*Red Baron* on the Nintendo Ultra 64 will give players a flight simulation experience like never before," said NoA chairman Howard Lincoln. Unless, presumably, you played Sierra On-Line's *Red Baron* on the PC, where it originated.

Red Baron will simulate combat intelligence characteristics of those flying aces who fought in World War 1, and allows you to challenge them in a dogfight. The aerial combat game was well-received on PC, and its strength was that it had playability without descending into the hardline – and occasionally dull – authenticity of simulations like F-19. It's actually quite an old game too, so there's plenty of opportunity to upgrade the graphics whilst retaining a flight sim that doesn't require an entire keyboard (plus overlay) to control.

And...

The third U64 games developer to strike a deal with Nintendo of America this month is Gametek.

Previously renowned throughout the SNES world for infamously dire TV licences such as *Jeopardy* and *Vanna White's Wheel of Fortune*, the company has increased its standing slightly with SNES conversions of *Brutal*, *Spectre*, *Super Troll Islands*, *Pinball Dreams* and *Pinball Fantasies*. A more optimistic sign is that Gametek's recent PC title *Quarantine*, although a *Doom* clone, achieved respectable scores in most magazines.

But with all due respect to Gametek and their constantly-improving image, we can't help wondering just how 'dreamy' Howard Lincoln's Dream Team will be considered by SNES owners, particularly in the US, who are more likely to have come into contact with their unforgettably poor *American Gladiators* (*SP10:* 16%).

Vanna White's Wheel of Fortune. It's as thrilling as the TV program.

HAGANE

Ocean ● 16 meg

Much pronunciatory disagreement is bound to occur, not to mention red faced embarrassment, when you try to ask for the thing in the shops. Hargarnee? Haygain? Azhanné?

Although this appeared in Japan last summer, it failed to excite the importers and its lack of availability was a factor in our decision not to review it. However, the game could now be picked up by Ocean for a UK release in the next month or two.

A platform slash-'em-up in the old-fashioned style, *Hagane*'s multi-talented main character is bound to draw comparisons with the likes of arcade classic *Strider*. Unfortunately, it reminded us more of *Run Saber* by Atlus – another factor in our decision not to review – although a high difficulty level and a lack of restart points suggest a greater longevity than *Run Saber*'s four levels could muster.

One of *Hagane*'s more endearing points is the grappling hook, which enables our lone warrior to leap chasms and climb to high platforms. Combined with his ability to spin off walls, it actually makes him one of the more interesting characters to come our way this year. Especially as he looks as if he'd slice your head off if you so much as pronounced his name wrong.

Beady-eyed monster gargoyle monster thing – obviously.

Sponsored by British Gas.

Don't know if my peashooter will even dent this.

If you stare at it, that Japanese symbol looks a bit like an Indian chief.

The hero on a pedestal.

AKIRA

THQ

What forthcoming game has been responsible for more questions put to the overworked Game Freak than any other? Why, none but *Akira*, the movie that launched a thousand bootleg T-shirts. Otomo's science fiction epic, set in Neo Tokyo, was the first introduction to anime for many *Super Play* readers, and its SNES debut is obviously of great interest.

But hold on. Although screenshots of the SNES version have yet to appear, we do know that it's going to be a conversion of the ICE-developed title currently appearing on home computer formats.

So take a look at the recent scores that other Future magazines awarded ICE's *Akira*...

Amiga Power – 16%; 'a hotch-potch of badly implemented, hackneyed sub-games' – Jonathan Davies.

Amiga Format – 18%, 'a pile of unmitigated, dated, shabby toss' – Steve Bradley.

Oh dear.

Obviously, the console version could surprise and delight us all by proving to be a completely different canteen of fishies, and we should stress that the Amiga screenshots shown here need bear no relation to what materialises on the SNES. No way would we judge THQ's version of the game without seeing it. Oh no.

If, however, the cartridge should appear in you local shops, MAKE SURE YOU READ THE *SUPER PLAY* REVIEW BEFORE BUYING IT.

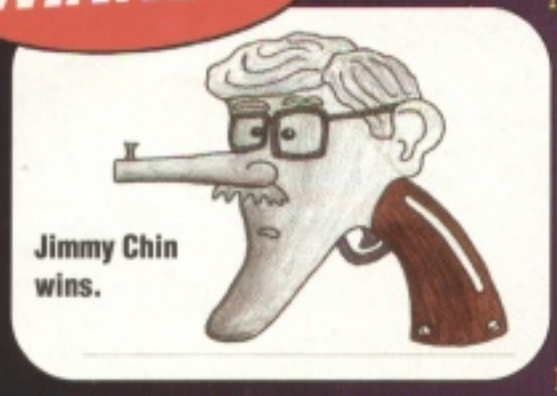
"Hello. My name's Akira and I've got an abnormally high forehead."

Ahh. The stuff heroes are made of. Akira valiantly strides across a nice tablecloth.

SYNDICATE COMPO WINNERS

We had a startling number of entries for our Ocean/*Syndicate* competition in issue 26 where we asked you to design the perfect weapon. After consulting a panel of experts, we dithered and deliberated, much like they do on Master Chef and... the winner is... James Gladwin from Milton Keynes with the Jimmy Hill-atron. According to James the gun works as follows: "Shoot this at someone and they will grow a moustache and an annoyingly long chin, and start to argue with everyone they see about football, thus creating a disturbance, so you can walk past undetected!" For master-minding such a truly lethal weapon, he gets a Sony GV-S5OE-KIT, more commonly known as a bloody fantastic, fully portable, audio-visual home entertainment system.

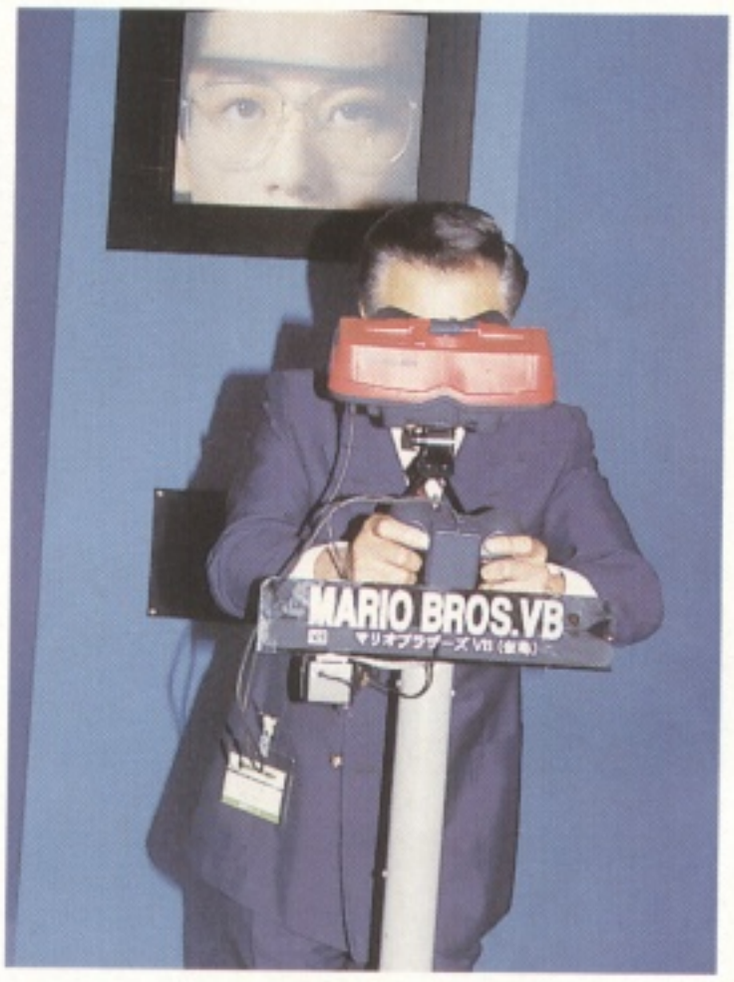
WINNER!



Jimmy Chin wins.

Runners-up are Neil Butler from Merthyr Tydfil with his Price Gun 'which fires hundreds of price stickers which can never be peeled off. The enemy will die a slow death of frustration as well as the need for a manicure.' Er, great. Also, not quite as funny as the winner, but almost there and funny enough to merit a *Syndicate* briefcase and T-shirt are Philip Eagles' numerous designs from Eastleigh, Scott Mumford's Grannyator, James Stacey's Double-Barrelled Des, John Paul Kamath's Birling 3000, Lisa Munn's Originality Gun, Ian Brown's Captain Birdseye Semi-Automatic Mkl™, Pedro Luis Janela Pinto's Swiss Army Completron, Anna Rinaldi's Disrober and Jamie Agnew's Lecturer.

NO VEEBIES UNTIL SUMMER, SAYS NINTENDO



The commercial release of the Virtual Boy has been delayed, according to Nintendo of Japan. Originally scheduled for the end of April, it is now clear that the new console will not appear before July 21st.

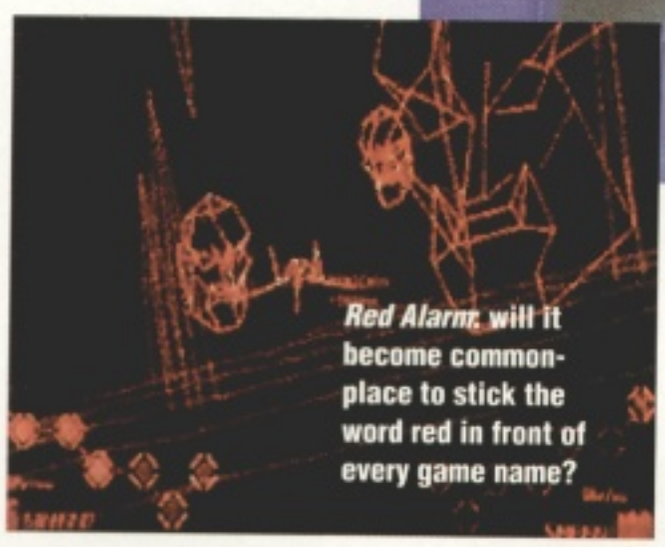
Another revelation regarding the much-criticised hardware is that its price is expected to drop to around ¥15,000 (around £105). Previous announcements had suggested figures of ¥19,800 upwards.

The only reason given for the delay, according to Nintendo, is the 'slow development of software'. Although this suggests technical difficulties, it's been quite clear from the start that other game developers have been unenthusiastic, even reluctant, to commit themselves to writing games for the new system. Hudsonsoft's overhead shoot-'em-up is one of the few third party projects to be previewed to date.

Further rumours have reached *Super Play* that the unit may be modified to contain another colour LED to improve the display – this, however, is highly unlikely.

The Economics students amongst you may already know that the Yen has been gaining in strength in the international markets, and this change in exchange rates is likely to make Japanese-manufactured hardware such as the VB far more expensive over here. In any case, Nintendo has made it quite clear that neither Virtual Boy nor Ultra 64 will appear in the UK before 1996.

Looks a bit like a flying jellyfish-shaped cartridge.



Are these things ever *really* going to take off? Imagine a train full of people wearing these...

SNIPPETS

How will you react, we wonder, when we tell you that the worst game in the world is to have a sequel? Will you, as we did, break the legs off a chair and wave them furiously at the heavens in a futile expression of twentieth century angst? Then lock up your furniture as we reveal that a follow-up to *Rise of the Robots* is being written at this very moment. *ROTR* developer Mirage claims that *Rise 2: Resurrection*, with its 18 characters and all-new special moves, will mark a 'quantum leap forward' in depth of gameplay. Shyeah, right.

Because of the number of formats that were 'treated' to *Rise Of The Robots*, it's most likely that you've already seen a version of the original 'game' (we use these terms, not just lightly, but downright inaccurately): if not, you'll be able to catch it on coin-op at your local arcade this summer. See how long your three-piece lasts then, eh?

If you're of a nervous disposition, don't read this: *Rise of the Robots 2* is on the way. *Nooooooooo!*

● Make sure you look after your SNES: it's going to have to last you a few years yet. According to a new report, games for the existing 16-bit consoles will retain their mass popularity until 1997. Inteco's business survey *Multimedia in the Home* holds bad news for the 'next-gen' machines, predicting that sales of CD console titles won't overtake cartridges until 1998 – when they will still only claim a predicted 64% of the market. With the recent news that the Saturn and the Playstation will cost more than £400 on launch, thanks to international exchange rates, it looks like the clever money is still backing successful 16-bit games.

● It had to happen: *Super Play* magazine has gone electronic. Future Publishing now has a 'presence' on the internet, and we're a small but burgeoning part of it. So if you have access to a computer plus modem, you can catch a glimpse of what we're doing at the following site.

▪ Futurenet's location...

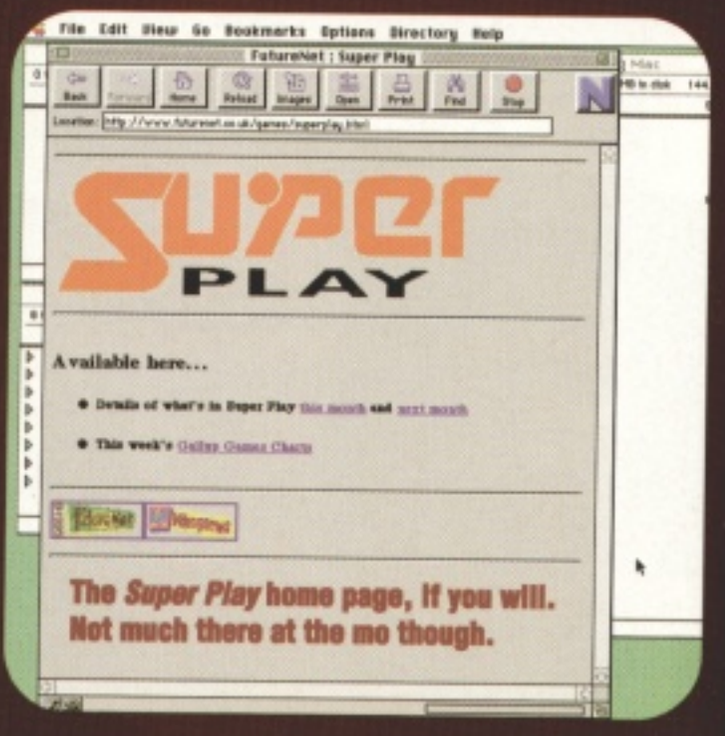
http://www.futurenet.co.uk

You'll also be able to send e-mail messages straight to our untidy desks.

▪ Super Play's e-mail address...

splay@futurenet.co.uk

We have plans to place directories of news, reviews and guides on our pages, not to mention the latest tips. You can even browse through what's going on in other Future magazines. It's still very open-ended, so we want your feedback. Tell us what you'd like to see on our pages.


File Edit View Go Bookmarks Options Directory Help
FutureNet : Super Play
Super PLAY
Available here...
The *Super Play* home page, if you will. Not much there at the mo though.

CAMMY IN PERIL!

Brand-name Capcom loses money and cred

As we reported back in issue 26 ('Capcom Gets A Good Bashing'), games publisher Capcom has had a tough time convincing us to buy its titles and its sales have dropped dramatically. However, startling new figures reveal the extent of the company's failures.

In the past year, the Japanese developer behind *SFII* and *Mega Man* has suffered a consolidated loss of 10.5 billion Yen – amounting to a 97% reduction in profit after tax. It's now a possibility that the company will go under.

Despite its strong presence in arcades worldwide, the majority of Capcom's business is done in the 16-bit home market. But the company's single-mindedness in milking its *Street Fighter* series has disillusioned many players, and it is now widely regarded as a one-product company.

Worse, Capcom put up the cash to finance its forthcoming live-action Street Fighter movie starring Jean Claude Van Damme and Kylie Minogue. As well as taking a critical bashing, the film ran over budget after delays and finally cost a total of £45 million.

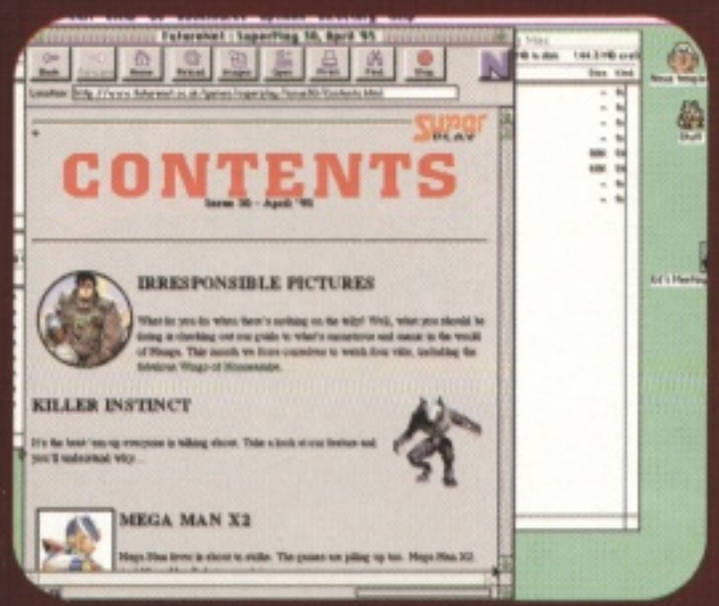
It's not all bad news. Capcom still intends to release eight more 16-bit games during 1995, and whilst we're not thrilled by *Captain Commando* or *Rockman 7* (two definite SNES outings), it does suggest that they'll need to rely on conversions of their better coin-ops – such as the *Dark Stalkers* and *X-Men* games – to recoup some of their losses. Capcom genuinely can't afford to manufacture cartridges that aren't profitable triple-A chart toppers. From a gameplayer's point of view, that's no bad thing.

STOP PRESS

Is it the end of the road for Cammy and the rest of her gang?

The Next Big Thing?

Capcom was also forced to unveil its plans for the next generation consoles; *Super Play* can reveal that its new project for the U64 is provisionally titled *Virtua Streetfighter II*, and is a 3D beat-'em-up in the style of Takara's *Toshinden*. Although the style could be sufficiently different to give Ryu and Chunners a new lease of life, we wonder if Capcom's reliance on *SF* characters for another game isn't a disaster?



Another net site showing the 'What's in *Super Play* this month?' page. The attractive sea-green colour in the background is the Ed's desktop. Interesting, eh?

● How much would you pay for an Ultra 64 game? Startlingly, it was revealed that Capcom makes the same amount of money on a ¥5,400 game CD for the Saturn, 3DO or Playstation as it does on a ¥9,800 ROM cart for the SNES. The figures are worse when you consider the mask-ROM technology that Ultra 64 cartridges will supposedly use: Capcom reckons U64 games would have to cost at least ¥13,800 (almost £100) a time if they were to make the same profit. Clearly, the Ultra 64 wouldn't sell too well with those sort of prices. *Super Play* reiterates the opinion expressed in last month's feature that Ultra 64 will need to switch to CD storage if it's to have any chance of success.

● Want to play all the latest releases? Startlingly precise and objective as our reviews tend to be, there will always be times when you hand over a pile of cash for a game you simply don't like when you get it home. That's why *Super Play* supports the 'try before you buy' policy. Unfortunately Nintendo has always worked to prohibit cart rental, and many people are simply unaware that they can hire out games like videos. However, an organisation called ESRA is now working to place video rental in more than 600 stores across the UK. We'll bring you more news on this scheme as we get it.

Above: the Future Net home page where you can read stuff from loads of other mags. There's all sorts on offer from video games to guitars.

FANTA

Enix hopes to make waves in the UK. We examine what they're up to in the US and Japan right now.

Burning Heroes

Enix ● 16 meg

In Japanese, the game's original title of *Nekketsu Tairiku* means 'hot-blood continent, burning heroes'. It makes a little more sense when you understand the background of the plot and its playing system.

Our story begins on that icon of Japanese fantasy, the floating continent. Humans inhabit the airborne realm of Astralia, but they envy the abundant resources of the land below. Eventually their worst desires get the better of them and they invade the terrestrial paradise, evicting the defenceless indigenous people. Those natives that survive are forced to ascend to Astralia, where the portal between the two realms is sealed: the floating continent is then sent on its way, a prison in the skies.

But time passes, and Astralia is returning to overshadow the new lives that humans have made. When the door between the worlds opens again, the exiles will want their revenge...

The game proper concerns the adventures of eight characters. At the start you can choose if you wish to play Gao, a sharpshooter, Chocola or Mobius (magic users), or one of the others. You then have the chance to choose the friends who will accompany you, and this affects the plotlines you can follow.

Each character's fighting spirit is represented by a 'hot-blood' gauge, which increases when the character is hurt in battle. When the gauge displays full strength it's possible to perform a special attack, such as the mighty Burning Dragon technique.

Burning Heroes has just been released in Japan, and doesn't possess the sort of profile that would normally suggest a translation in the pipeline, as happened with *Illusion of Gaia* (just released in the UK as *Illusion of Time*). However, see our 'Oi, Over Here!' box.

Hot-blood fighter Ryu (top), with Rooga, Laila and Gao.

Run. Run for your life.

What's this then? Answers on a postcard...

A Dragon / Ball scenario?

Turn-based combat RPGs stunt your growth, you know.

The smoking visage of Simon Callow gave them strength to fight on.

Oi, over here!

The good news for RPG fans is that Enix has expressed an interest in broadening its business interests, and the European market is a part of that. With the release of *Illusion of Gaia* by Nintendo UK, it seems Enix wishes to create the same licensing deal that is supposed to exist with Square. *Super Play* will be talking to the company's Japanese decision-makers next month to see what sort of games we might expect to see cropping up in the UK...

ASY QUEST

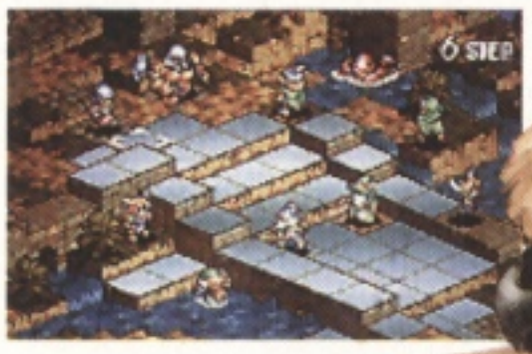
by Nic di Costanzo and Zy Nicholson

Tactics Ogre

Quest ● 24 meg

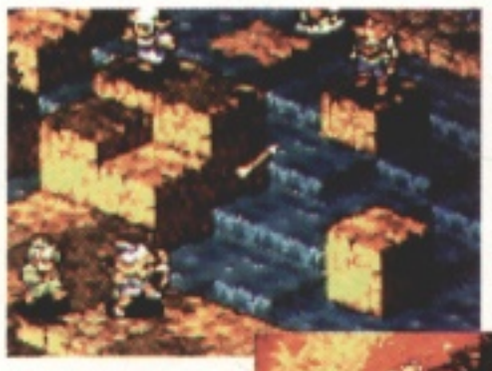
Tactics Ogre – which is actually the sequel to *Ogre Battle* (see below) – is just about to be released in Japan, and looks every bit as excellent as Square's *Front Mission*. It uses a similar scrolling 3D terrain and the combat remains turn-based, but the milieu is once again that of fantasy role-playing.

A new twist is that combat sequences are carried out on the terrain screen, rather than switching to and from an isometric battle scene. Some impressive animations, such as tiny arrows arcing over walls and sword swipes being parried, mark *Tactics Ogre* as visually superior to the majority of tired home computer and PC wargames. The special graphical effects used to illustrate spells are occasionally groundbreaking.



Blue squares show your move limits.

Spellcasters are weak in physical combat but the sheer power, range and effective area of their battle magic relegates them to the role of 'artillery'. Mythical beasts such as griffins and wyverns are used to guard some of the enemy fortresses, but that's where a good tactician can co-ordinate groups of weaker troops to overcome major foes with special attacks.



An archer aims high at the enemy...

... Whilst a gryphon suffers at the centre of a wizard's fire storm (left).

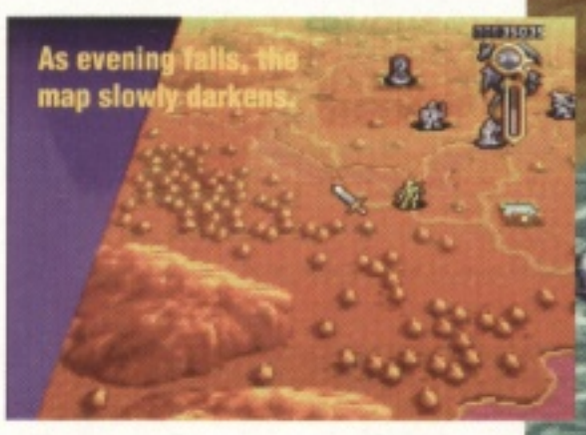
The Royal Ballet's Special Assault Team tones up (above).

Ogre Battle

Enix/Quest ● 12 meg

Although it's only just received a US translation, this game first appeared in Japan two years ago. Its graphical excellence still shames many recent efforts, but it's unlikely to achieve the same praise after such a long time. Nevertheless Enix of America has picked it up for the States, and it should be available by the time you're reading this.

Starting out with just a handful of loyal troops, it's your aim to conquer every country on the map whilst amassing an army. There's a further strategy angle in that although you build up your forces after liberating cities, you need to assign some of those valuable footsoldiers to defend your prize. Ousted enemy units will retreat and regroup, waiting to take advantage of a hole in your defences.



As evening falls, the map slowly darkens.

DON'T stand on a hill in a storm wearing copper armour and shouting 'all Gods are rubbish'.

Eyes! Little eyes! The Cloud of Doom! Aieee etc.

Magical power and divine patronage are represented by Tarot cards, which can be held until a useful opportunity to play them. Destroying enemies and invading fortresses will add to your card deck.

Combat switches to an isometric battle scene, akin to *Breath of Fire*, wherein you can attack with weapons or call on your Tarot card magic to cast offensive, defensive or healing spells. There's even the option to let fights run automatically, speeding up the game when the outcome is assured.

Enix of America has traditionally translated games developed at its Japanese HQ, but it's good to see it taking an interest in other worthy products. Look for our US *Ogre Battle* review next issue.

Although the Mobile Suits of Gundam were meant to be serious military hardware, the pressure of the toy companies forced the creators to add extras like transforming Gundams that changed into planes and such like. Something that, at times, seemed to be at odds with the dramatic nature of the stories.

Contrary to popular belief, the Gundam pilot doesn't sit in the head, but in the chest. The eyes are merely cameras that send pictures to screens in the cockpit.

The Masters Of Mech

ANIME WORLD

Pronounced 'ah-nee-may'

Mobile SUIT Gundam

Want to chat someone up at an anime convention? Just drop the fact that you know that Gundam actually stands for General Utility Non-Discontinuity Augmented Manoeuvring System into the conversation and they'll fall at your feet (foaming at the mouth, no doubt).

by P J Evans

Anime has robots in the same way that cider has apples and bones have calcium. Huge and horribly beweaponed metal monstrosities have been striding unstoppably over the screens and, most importantly, the toyshops of Japan, ever since Osamu Tezuka created a mechanical version of *Pinocchio* and called him *Tetsuwan Atom* back in 1951. In terms of length, breadth, depth, and sheer sales, however, the king of the robot shows is undoubtedly *Mobile SUIT Gundam*.

It was there before *Patlabor*. It's longer than *Armoured Trooper VOTOMS*. It's got more people in it than all the *Macross* sagas put together. And yet, it has never been released in this country, and possibly never will be. *Mobile SUIT Gundam* is such a valuable commodity that Sunrise, its owners, have put the frighteners on both *AUK* and *Manga Mania* for even mentioning it without permission. Read this article quietly.

Gundam was written by Yoshiyuki Tomino, back in 1979. At that time, giant robot shows were dominated by series like *Go Nagai's Getta Robotto* in 1974 and the 1975 Studio Nue

vehicle *Yusha Raideen* (Brave Raideen), and based around brightly-coloured mechanical heroes fighting for justice against increasingly bizarre enemies. *Mobile SUIT Gundam* took a different route, telling a sprawling tale of a war in space fought using mecha as weapons – in effect, the fighting machines were the future equivalent of tanks and warplanes.

This simple switch in emphasis turned the giant robot genre on its head. Mobile SUITs were pieces of military hardware, and for the most part were designed as such. The characters on both sides were soldiers, fighting for a cause they believed in, and were as likely to be killed in action as not. A vague nod was even made in the direction of scientific realism, with objects floating in zero gravity when in space, and no mention of aliens, faster-than-light travel or the casual star-hopping so prevalent in space operas like *Star Wars*. Compared to its contemporaries, *Gundam* was a market leader in character depth and mechanical design, although claiming a 20-metre robot as scientifically realistic is about as sensible as attributing The Guyver with deep social insight.

The *Gundam* saga begins with the construction of several huge space colonies – literally self-contained worlds on a scale that makes *Babylon 5* look compact and bijou – at various gravitationally stable points around the inner solar system. Of course, these colonies did what colonies tend to do, and soon began to demand independence from the United Nations of Terra. As tension grew and both sides armed themselves, the discovery of a kind of subatomic particle by Professor Minovsky changed the whole balance of space combat: used as a kind of smokescreen, these Minovsky particles could block radar, radio waves – in fact, anything used to make long range combat possible. Guided missiles went out the window, replaced by huge piloted robots, capable of taking on a space cruiser in hand-to-ship combat. They were called Mobile SUITs (Space Utility Instrument, Tactical), the most famous of which is the sleek and deadly Gundam used by UNT forces.

Mobile SUITs were first used in anger when the Archduchy of Zion, the most powerful faction among the rebel colonies, launched sneak attacks on UNT outposts. In the short conflict that followed, almost a billion people died.

From then on it was all-out war, involving a multitude of colonies, political beliefs, leaders, traitors, agents, heroes, villains, and big lumps of machinery blowing each other up. An article of this size can't even begin to encompass the sheer scale of the *Gundam* saga – the whole thing stretches over more than a century, with dozens of characters fighting, dying, and changing sides with alarming regularity. The cast of *Gundam*, although tryingly riddled with angst and personal tragedy, proved to be an engaging bunch, and the Japanese public have kept coming back for more.

Mobile SUIT Gundam began as a TV series in 1979. It was cancelled after 43 episodes due to poor ratings, but the range of *Gundam* toys in circulation proved so popular that the show just kept bouncing back. It was a perfect financial circle – each series would introduce new, funkier Mobile SUITs, as Zion and UNT forces updated their hardware: toy companies would sell millions of new products, and the money made would ensure the production of a new series.

The original TV *Gundam* was re-edited into a movie trilogy in 1981 and 1982 – *Gundam*, *Gundam II: Gentle Warrior*, and *Gundam III: Space Homecoming*. Back on the small screen, 50 episodes of *Zeta Gundam* were followed by 47 of *Double Zeta Gundam*. 1988 saw a brand new movie feature, called *Gundam RX93: Char's Counterattack*. An OAV series in 1989 turned the clock back on the saga with *Gundam 0080: War in the Pocket*, an action-orientated tale set in the middle of the war. *Gundam F91* hit Japanese cinemas in 1991, but proved too different from classic *Gundam* for many fans, so *Gundam 0083: Stardust Memory* came out in the same year, a 13-part OAV series that, like *0080*, took place in *Gundam* history's most famous period. That series was re-edited for the cinema in 1992, but already a new generation of potential consumers was finding its voice. Always one step ahead of the game, the *Gundam* creators aimed their next offering – the TV series *Victory Gundam* – at a far younger market, with the mecha growing more toylike and the pilots becoming worryingly underage. *V Gundam* finished in September 1993, making way for the *Street Fighter*-esque *G Gundam*, launched firmly at the gaming market.

As an exercise in merchandising, *Gundam* remains unsurpassed. Finding an anime mag without an advert for *Gundam* products within its pages is like looking for hen's teeth. It's been estimated that ten *Gundam* toys have been sold for every woman, man, and child in Japan! You do the maths: I'll be back next month.

Each new series of *Mobile Suit Gundam* allowed toy company Bandai to flood the shops with more Gundam merchandise, leading to the worrying rumour that there are now 10 Gundam kits per head of the Japanese population.

ANIME CONTACT

Anime UK (£2.70) and *Manga Mania* (£1.95) are now both available from all good newsagents.

LIVE FROM HELL CITY

COMMERCIAL CONCERNS

By Tony Mott

It's easy to miss videogames ads in Britain, squeezed as they are between the Bisto Gravy Family and the Pampers Nappies, but in Japan you can't escape the hands of the marketing men. We're not complaining though, these ads are worth watching...

Breath of Fire. **Unfortunately it's unlikely you'll ever see anything like this on UK TV. It's better than a lot of our telly and it's only an ad!**

In the UK and US, television video game advertising is the domain of the mundane, with SNESaholics served up a strict platter of either agonising, 'personality'-led shorts or tired 'blip vert' multi-hit sequences. On the other side of the coin is Japan, where switched-on TV ad execs work within no such boundaries. There, gamers enjoy as wide a spectrum of ideas in game ads as so famously permeates all other forms of Japanese entertainment.

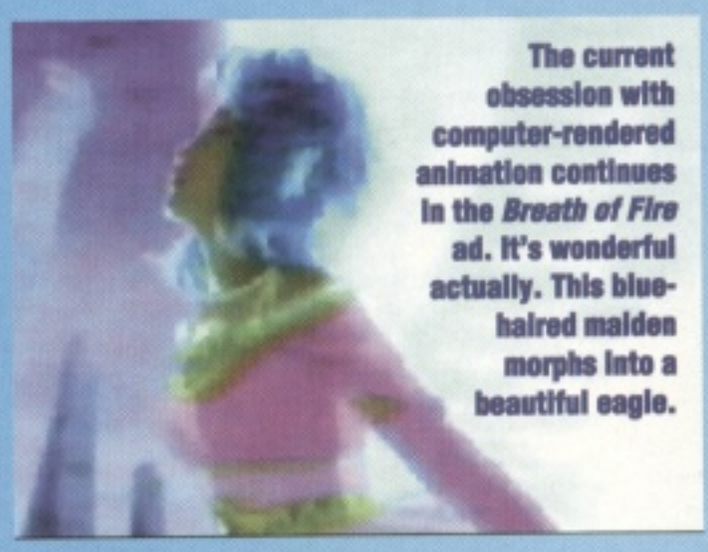
So, while we get saggy poodle rock star David Lee Roth lending personality to a disembodied brain in a jar, your average Japanese channel-hopper feasts on the likes of Hudson Soft's *Super Bomberman 3* TV trailer, featuring man-sized Bombermen dashing around the streets of Tokyo, attempting to squeeze onto trains, bumping into things and generally behaving in a truly *Banana Splits* fashion.

One of the most prolific Japanese softcos keen to air their wares on the good old cathode ray tube is Capcom. Their latest series of ads feature several common themes, and demonstrate the company's current fascination with computer-rendered animation, as seen previously in press adverts for the *Street Fighter II OAV* (see issue 27).

Their *Rockman X2* trailer, for example, uses the classic *Mega Man* lines rendered with a fresh new lick of lightsource-shaded paint. Placing the character against a backdrop of complex computer-generated imagery, it attempts to upsell the game's supposedly cutting edge values (it has a custom 'C4' graphics chip, remember?), and is a fascinating demonstration of attention-grabbing advertising that relies on the strength of characters themselves rather than any embarassingly contrived sales lines.

Conversely, the current *Rockman 7* commercial steps back in time to deliver its message (perhaps as a reminder that the game itself borrows from aged NES game themes). Crafted with a funky neon-spattered feel, it throws out some typical *Rockman* anime footage before interjecting with snatches from the game itself.

This relationship between actual game and other game-related footage is probably



The current obsession with computer-rendered animation continues in the *Breath of Fire* ad. It's wonderful actually. This blue-haired maiden morphs into a beautiful eagle.

the only point where Japanese commercials stray from the mark, at least from the avid gamefreak's point of view. Software companies offer only brief glimpses of the actual product, preferring to headline with sparkling animations and other visual candy. It's a typical Japanese games marketing technique; a drip-drip tactic that's especially evident in Japan's gaming press. The theory being that providing short snappy shots and bursts of info sufficiently whets gamers' appetites until the next sales phase is ready to kick in.

Apart from the strictly no-rules approach to TV ads in Japan, their sheer number and saturation of the airwaves is also remarkable. Forget a sliver-like snatch of *Rise Of The Robots* or *Donkey Kong Country* flitting on-screen during weekend ad breaks – in Japan games jostle with chocolate treats, breakfast cereals and anime series for lucrative slots.

It's further confirmation, of course, that the pervasion of video games in Japan is still as wide and far reaching as ever. So the latest hits sell off the back of ads feature blue-haired girls dramatically morphing into giant white eagles. We approve...

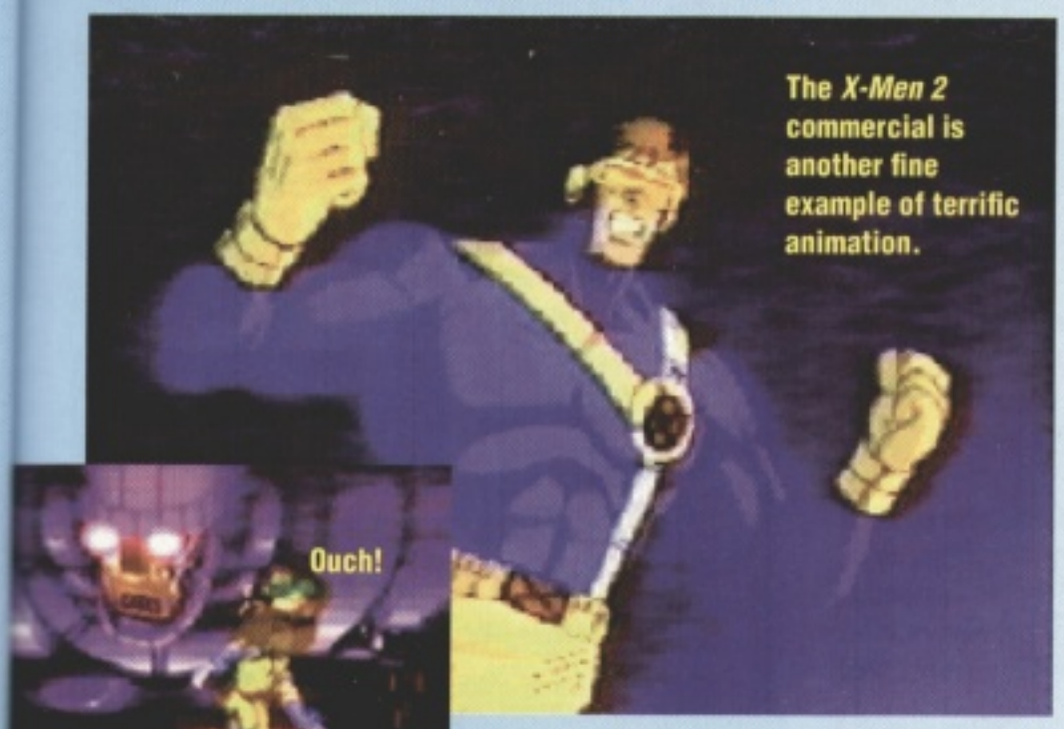
***Rockman X2*: A rather fine set of teeth. Easily worthy of a bit-part in a Mentadent P ad.**

The *Rockman 2* ad looks better than many cartoons we get.

Yeah, like, far out, psychedelic, man.

Imagine the stick you'd get if your parents had named you 'Rockman'.

Those crazy Japsters have a fascination for shiny white teeth.



The *X-Men 2* commercial is another fine example of terrific animation.

Ouch!

British ad men take note. Why don't we get quality ad breaks any more?

Batman Forever Judge Dredd
Doctor Who Star Trek: Voyage
r The Avengers Terry Pratche
t Waterworld Babylon 5 Red D
warf Aliens Blade Runner X-F
iles The Prisoner Blake's 7 Sta
r Wars Village of the Damned
Tank Girl Thunderbirds Deep S
pace Nine Clive Barker The Hi
chhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
Johnny Mnemonic Godzilla Aki
ra Spiderman Mission Imposs
ible Stargate Space:1999 Plan
et of the Apes Dune Lost in Sp

Future PUBLISHING

Coming soon SFX

Below: do battle by selecting first your man, then your attack mode, then your victim. Ha, ha, who's going to be first to taste the end of my spear then?

This clever transporter device goes wrong unfortunately, and hurls our Chrono's girlfriend off into the vortex, where all the troubles begin...

Chrono Trigger
Square ● 32 meg

It plays like a cross between *Secret of Mana* and *Final Fantasy VI*, and yet it's got a style all of its own. Square's latest RPG is their biggest project to date and has already succeeded in capturing the minds of Japanese gameplayers. Here's a taster of what's to come.

The character sprites are quite large and within certain areas you're free to run about the gorgeously detailed environs with your comrades in tow. But when you encounter a particularly aggressive representative of the local monster community, you move into position and hack it out ATB style – a turn-based combat system, much like *Final Fantasy*, which takes into account the attack rate and initiative speed of each character per round.

Chrono Trigger was programmed by the Dream Project Team, a trio of developers whose most famous member is without a doubt Akira Toriyama, the artist behind *Dragon Ball Z* and *Go Go Ackman*. Toriyama designed the spiky-haired heroes and blue-skinned humanoids of *Chrono Trigger*, and here on *Super Play* we've already received many of your Envelope Art submissions that attempt to imitate his style. The sincerest form of flattery, as we all know.

Sadly that very rare species of turtle is not long for this world. The poor thing.

The start of the game: all the fun of the fair...

Although the graphics don't use the 256 colour palette throughout, there's an attention to lighting and texture that makes it consistently attractive. The attention to detail often fools you into thinking you're watching a monitor screen image.

Our early impressions are that it's not quite as deep as *Final Fantasy VI*, although it is more accessible, and that the music isn't (as we had hoped) by the composer behind *Secret of Mana*. But wait for our big feature in next month's *Super Play*, when we'll tell you more about this incredible game.

The medieval castle is the place for a jolly good feed.

THE SUPER QUIZ!

Whilst watching a recent episode of the X-Men animated series on Live and Kicking, we heard Beast address a lynchmob of the cartoon's thinly disguised neo-Nazi anti-mutant cyphers with the bewilderingly complex rhetoric: 'Don't you self-appointed social engineers understand the importance of the role that genetic mutation plays in the evolution of the species?'

Impressed with his grasp of public speaking – this was Saturday morning TV, after all – we naturally asked the active azure X-Man to write this month's Super Quiz.

What did we come up with? Well, take a look to the right there...

Easy

1. How many Addams Family games have appeared on the SNES?
2. Which actor can be considered the 'connection' between *Addams Family Values* and *Street Fighter II*?
3. *Which Killer Instinct* character name is a Rare in-joke?

Medium

1. Which Nintendo character will front the Western version of Banpresto's *Super Puyo Puyo*?
2. Which Namco character from the past has been reborn in puzzle and platform games for the SNES?
3. The puzzle game of the previous question was a reworking of which arcade/SNES title?

Hard

1. What's the name of Japan's organised crime ring?
2. In what Tokyo district does it supposedly have its base?
3. Which Arcade Classic, converted to the Spectrum, will soon appear on the Super Famicom?

Alas, the Beast declined to write this section, citing his fictional existence as an excuse for having no creative presence in the noumenal world.

So these questions have been penned by one of the *Super Play* team, body hair dyed blue and suspended by their toes from a shower rail. Probably. Answers on page 82.

THE CHARTS

For weekly UK SNES chart updates you can either tune into Digitiser, Teletext page 470, Channel 4 or use your Dad's PC to read the Super Play page on the Internet at http://www.futurenet.co.uk

OFFICIAL GALLUP UK SUPER NINTENDO CHART

UP DOWN NON MOVER NEW ENTRY

1	▶	INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER Konami	SP30 92%
2	▶	STARWING Nintendo	SP7 93%
3	▶	DONKEY KONG COUNTRY Nintendo	SP27 90%
4	▲	DESERT FIGHTER Kixx	SP N/A
5	▲	NBA JAM Tournament Edition Acclaim	SP30 90%
6	▲	CANNON FODDER Virgin	SP28 89%
7	▼	THE LION KING Virgin	SP29 82%
8	★	JURASSIC PARK 2 Ocean	SP27 83%
9	▼	BATTLETOADS IN BATTLEMANIACS Nintendo	SP11 80%
10	▶	PLOK Nintendo	SP14 90%

UK IMPORT CHART

Compiled by Captain Dodgy and his import pixies

1	FINAL FANTASY III	Squaresoft
2	MEGA MAN X2	Capcom
3	SUPER PUNCH OUT!	Nintendo
4	ILLUSION OF GAIA	Enix
5	X-MEN Mutant Apoc.	Capcom
6	SAMURAI SPIRITS	Takara
7	OGRE BATTLE	Quest
8	DEMON'S CREST	Capcom
9	DONKEY KONG COUNTRY	Nintendo
10	GO GO ACKMAN	Banpresto

It's fair to say that the SNES import market has suffered lately, with the bigger titles getting released officially quicker than ever, and more and more importers moving over to the new super consoles. But with titles like *Final Fantasy III* still having no UK release date, sometimes an American or Japanese cart is the only way to go.

AMERICAN CHART

Compiled by some people from America

1	DONKEY KONG COUNTRY	Nintendo
2	NBA LIVE '95	EA Sports
3	STAR TREK SFA	Interplay
4	MORTAL KOMBAT II	Acclaim
5	FINAL FANTASY III	Squaresoft
6	THE LION KING	Virgin
7	EARTHWORM JIM	Virgin
8	SUPER MARIO KART	Nintendo
9	TETRIS/Dr. MARIO	Nintendo
10	BASSIN'S BLACK BASS	Hot B

Who will ever understand the Americans? While we might be able to understand the bizarre Japanese fondness for fishing games, the appearance of *Bassin's Black Bass* in the US charts is a complete mystery to us. Other than that it's a pretty safe bunch, although Nintendo could do worse than release the *Tetris/Dr. Mario* bundle at a budget price over here.

JAPANESE CHART

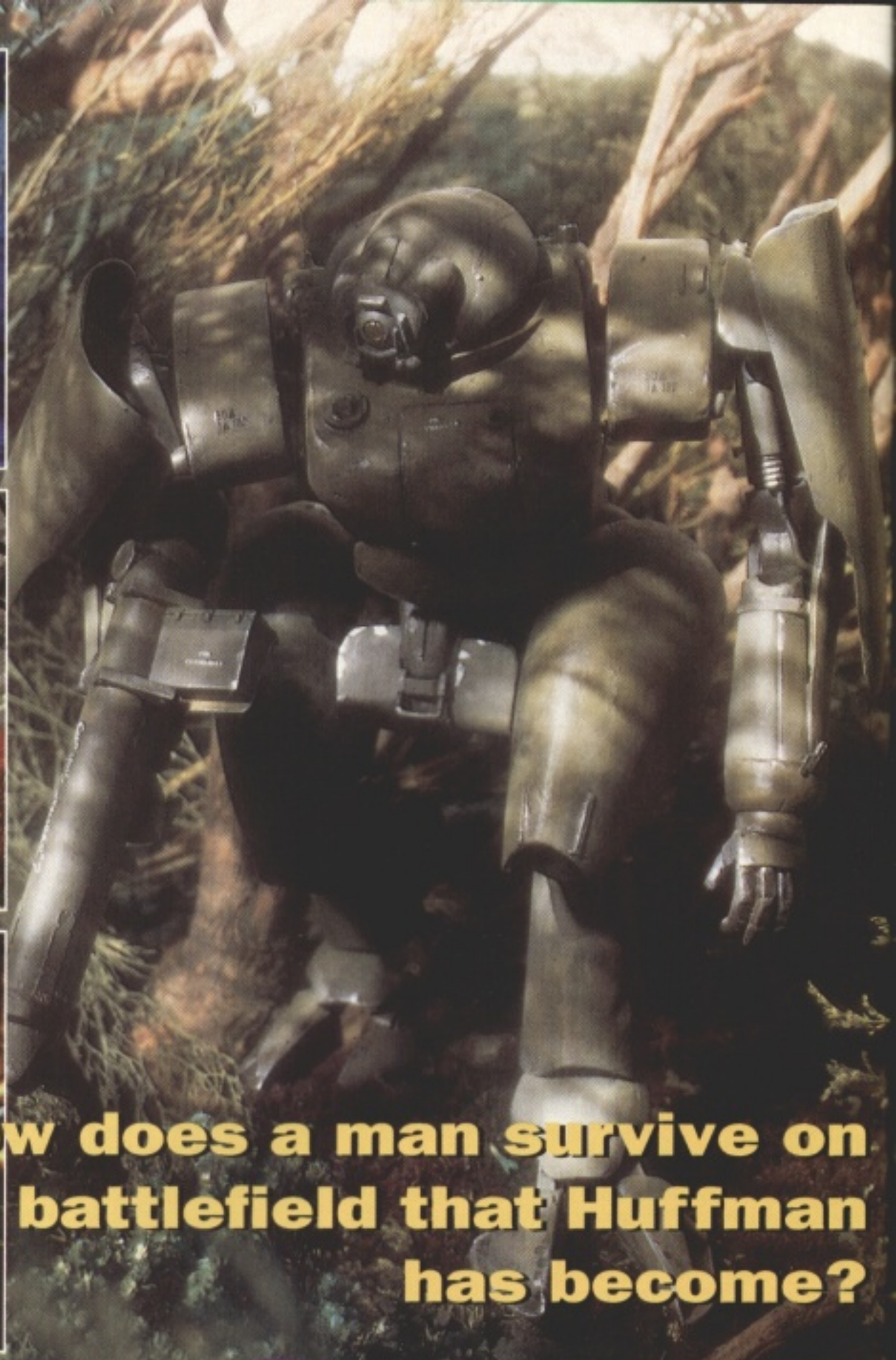
Compiled by Famicom Tsushin and Wil Overton

1	FRONT MISSION	Squaresoft
2	SUPER FAMISTAR 4	Namco
3	SUPER DONKEY KONG	Nintendo
4	DRIFT KING	Bullet Proof Software
5	BOMBERMAN PUZZLE W	Hudson Soft
6	KONAMI BASEBALL 2	Konami
7	ESTOPOLIS 2	Taito
8	SLAM DUNK 2	Bandai
9	HEWIA PACHINKO	
10	SAILOR MOON S	Bandai

Once again, a Square game proves a licence to print money in Japan. And we can probably expect to see *Chrono Trigger* doing the same next month. Otherwise, it's the usual eclectic mix of RPGs and baseball games. *Slam Dunk* makes an appearance more due to its anime connections than gameplay and the same goes for *Sailor Moon S*.

Strategy RPG

Combat



How does a man survive on the battlefield that Huffman has become?

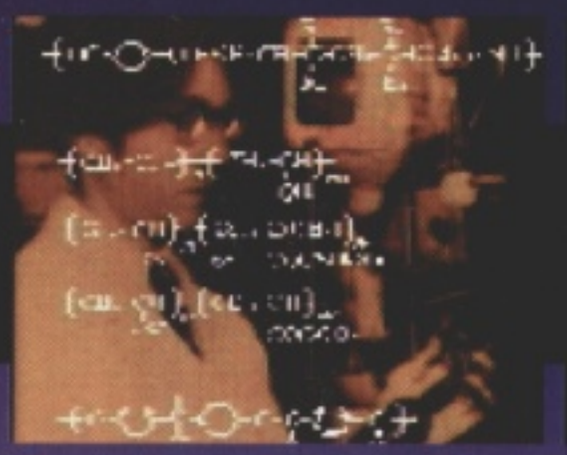
FRONT

Japanese Release

Game: Front Mission
Publisher: Squaresoft of Japan
Developer: In-house
Price: £60
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 24 Mbit plus battery back up
Adaptor: Needs NTSC SNES

ESCALATING THE WAR

The introduction hints, without words, at why Huffman island is so important. It depicts the discovery of the bio-technology that enabled mobile suits: the pilot of each suit is mentally and physically jacked into it, so that control becomes intuitive and instinctive.



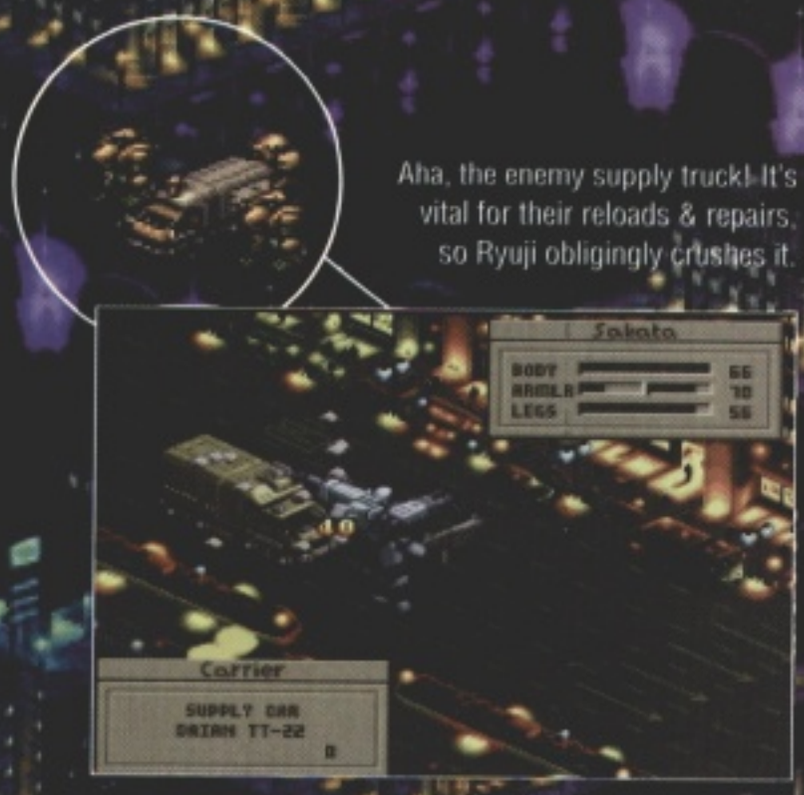
Super PLAY SPECIAL

METAL gear

メタルギアル

Driscoll's crab tank watches from afar, directing enemy operations.

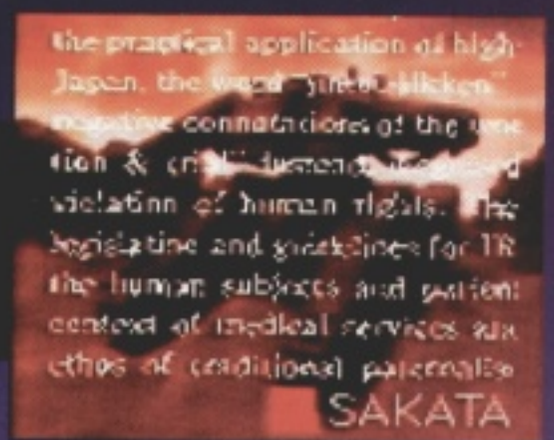
Attackers are deadly up close, so light up the neighbourhood with a long-range missile or three.



Aha, the enemy supply truck! It's vital for their reloads & repairs, so Ryuji obligingly crushes it.

Roll over *Syndicate*! The Canyon Claw mercenaries discover USN forces up to no good on the urban battlefield in this multi-screen tag-together...

MISSION



Automatic weapons can strafe several body areas. Peewie's truck looks severely outgunned.

Just so you know he's a Bad Guy, Yang solemnly reports that Driscoll's target was a hospital. Ooh, the cad.

LIKE, HEY MAN, WANNA BUY A MECH?

If you want, like, a suit upgrade, this man is your supplier. He runs a mech shop in every base and can provide for all your military hardware needs. But wait – isn't he half of American duo Cheech and Chong?

Separated at birth? Your friendly *Front Mission* shopkeeper (right) and top psychopharmacologist Chong (left).

THE CANYON CROW

Just some of the good guys you'll meet during your battle against the forces of the United States of the New Continent...

Roid Clive

Mech name: Shrike

The squad leader is driven by revenge since Driscoll ambushed his lover, Karen. But is she still alive, somewhere? The game's over if Roid (probably to be translated as Lloyd) is ever killed.

Natalie F. Blakewood

Mech name: PrimRose

Natalie's an original member of the Canyon Crows, but that doesn't stop her marching off when she believes strongly in something. She's a bit toasty with the Hot Dog flame thrower we've equipped.

Ryuji Sakata

Mech name: Raioh

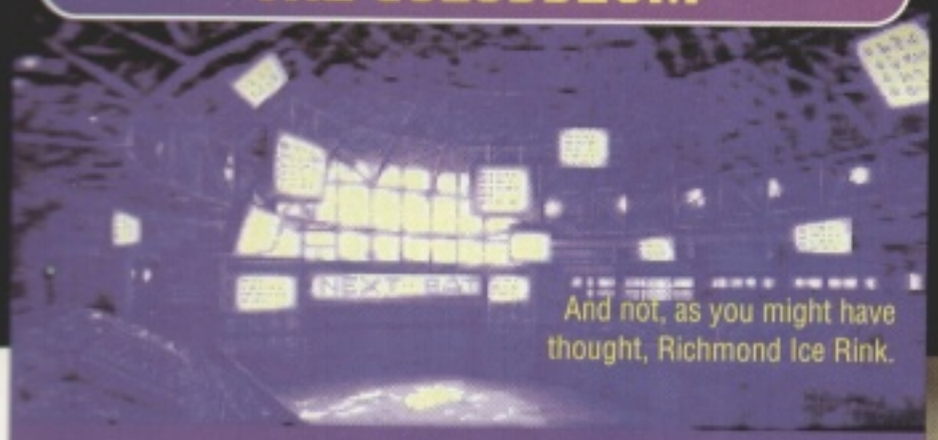
Ryuji and Roid go back a long way, despite their apparent youth. His suit, Raioh, has been fitted with a Skull missile rack and the Slay twin rocket launcher for long-range devastation.

Super PLAY SPECIAL

METAL gear

メタルギアル

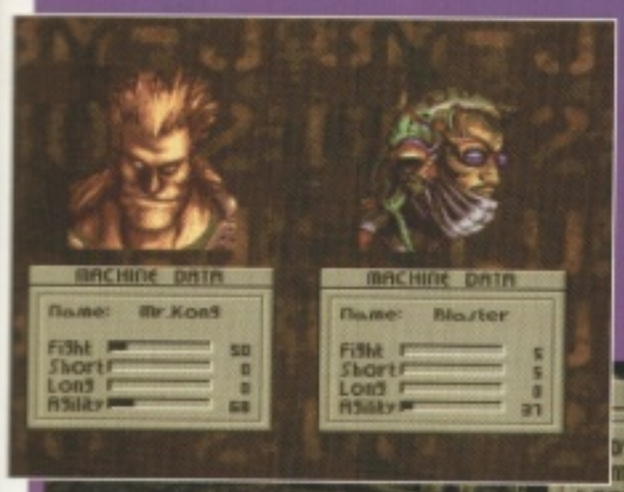
THE COLOSSEUM



And not, as you might have thought, Richmond Ice Rink.

If you want to test some new weapons, earn more cash or look for new recruits between missions, head for the Colosseum. You can challenge another mercenary to a gladiatorial duel and, if the odds are stacked against you, there's even a chance to make wads of moolah. Unlike *FFVI*, you retain control of your fighter. Judicious use of the Save/Load facility allows you to gloss over expensive defeats, however, so try not to cheat.

Oddly enough, there's even a little 'barcode battlers' type affair within the Colosseum options. Every suit has a password, so it's possible for you to go round a mate's house, type your best code on his FM cart and challenge his top pilot to a duel. Not that we advise such risible behaviour.



A pre-bout comparison confirms that, yep, Blaster is going to die.

Keith had better turn it around. I've got 2000 quid riding on this fight.

A smooth Mode 7 map screen depicts your truck en route to the Oceania Community Union's frontline military camp.

ANGLOPHILIA

Remarkably, the game's menus are all in English with Japanese subtitles. But the storyline – which is quite important, actually – is all in Japanese, so unless you wait for a US translation, you'll just have to guess what's going on. Or improvise your own irreverent dialogue, as we found ourselves doing.

Keith Carabell

Mech name: Ms. Jerry

A young Guile-alike, Keith joins Canyon Crow after Roid turns around an almost certain defeat. He carries the F4 baton for hand-to-hand combat and the Cemetary 10 automatic rifle for, er, luck.

Joynas Jeriaska

Mech name: Hunter J

JJ and Keith are like the partners of an American buddy movie, and you'd be foolish to split them up. Hunter J is currently fitted with tracks rather than legs for faster urban manoeuvres.

Frederick Lancaster

Mech name: Witness

You'll find Frederick at the scene of an air crash, USN in hot pursuit of his secret. The wing-shield fitted to his right shoulder can be raised to deflect or decrease damage caused by projectiles.

FRONT MISSION GOES LIVE!

The high profile of *Front Mission* in Japan was helped immensely by a successful TV advertisement, filmed on location in the USA last December. A private railway line was used to depict a scene of 'soldiers who are heading to their next mission using a pulley'. Such was the attention to detail that the actors involved were chosen for their resemblance to characters in the game. Square even borrowed real guns and equipment from the US Army to decorate the set with authentic hardware.

However, the real star of the advert was a Vantam Assault Suit, based on *Front Mission*'s own designs. At six metres high – the actual size of the suits in the game – it dwarfed the actors who shuffled about at its feet. We were disappointed to discover that it didn't work, but it reminded us that a Magitek suit was used to promote *Final Fantasy VI* in a similar TV ad last year.

Just a few days after it was released, Square's President went on TV himself to announce that *Front Mission* had already sold a staggering 500,000 copies – making it something of a cultural event. Capitalising on the success of the game, his intention was to make it absolutely clear that Square had become one of the biggest software developers in Japan (and, ergo, the world).

Here's your military operations supervisor, Orson. He'll brief you on each mission.

The dashing fop with the ponytail is Driscoll, sadistic leader of enemy USN forces. Hiss and throw tomatoes at the screen when he appears.

In the interests of victory, you should (ahem) check out every bar on Huffman..

Actors posing with real US Army issue weaponry...

... and shooting on location. You can even see Natalie (left).

WHAT'S AN ASSAULT SUIT, EXACTLY?

Perhaps the first thing to make clear about assault suits (or mobile suits, as they're more commonly referred to) is their size. They're massive. Although they're roughly the same shape as a person, they're much bigger. Which would make them pretty alarming things to meet in in a dark alley. But, contrary to their appearance, they're not robots. They can't think for themselves. Instead they're more like exoskeletons, enhancing the abilities of their operator, who sits in the cockpit (which is more often or not in the chest) where the brain would be.

In keeping with the latest thinking in Japan, some of the newer anime suits are not constructed of metal, but high-impact ceramics.

ENHANCING? HOW?

Well, for a start they can run really fast. They're also heavily armoured (so, in a way, they're like the modern equivalent of a suit of armour). They pack a formidable array of weaponry – guns, rockets, grenades, etc – the exact composition of which varies from suit to suit. Oh, and they can often fly.

Mech name:
Mr Kong

Gregorio

Recruit Gregorio if you can – he's a brawler, a pugilist, a roister-doister par excellence who can stun an opponent and rip off their arms before they can say 'Mr. Kong? That's a silly name for a –'.

Paul

He might look like a CND / Greenpeace anarcho-hippy terrorist but, er, he probably is.

Yang

The hot-headed Chinese girl has something to prove (and something for Paul, we think).

Hans

Definitely the Geordi of the pack, with a natty VR HUD to help him shoot straight.

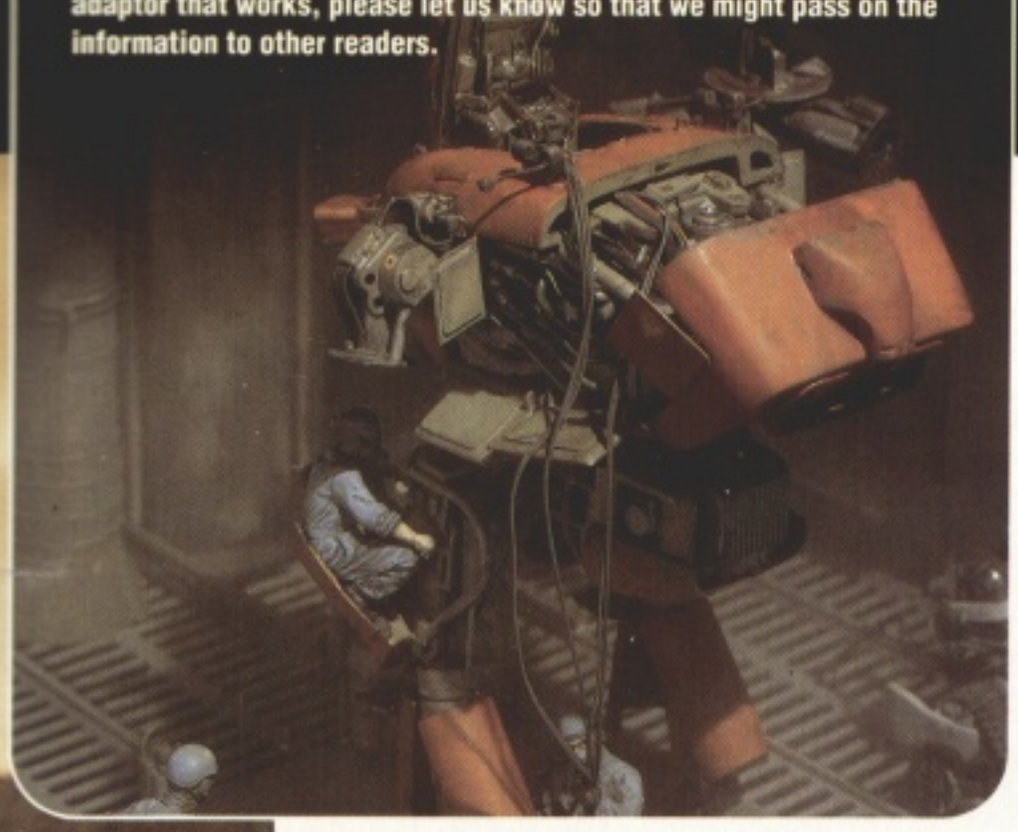
Hangar 26-A – what secret does it hold? Quite evidently, we don't know.

Karen Meure

Roid is still haunted by memories of his lover, Karen. But is she still alive, somewhere on Huffman Island?

TALE OF WOE

Unfortunately, we haven't had much luck running this game on a UK PAL SNES. It seems to work fine at first, even plays through the first mission, but then crashes irretrievably. If anybody can find an adaptor that works, please let us know so that we might pass on the information to other readers.



GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

A recent survey in popular Japanese magazine 'Trendy' (er, it doesn't sound so cool over here, I know) saw Square voted the most reliably consistent producer of quality games, beating even Nintendo into top slot. *Front Mission* confirms that reputation: the presentation is of such an impeccable standard that you wonder why all SNES programmers aren't made to sit in a room and examine it before being allowed to write for the console. Strong characters, beautifully visualised, add that necessary personal touch to your team of hired guns; whilst every section of the game has its own musical score, whether it's the jazz soirée of the mercenary's bar or the supermarket lilt of the armoury shop.

Playability isn't neglected, for all that. Despite the genre of *Front Mission* – a turn-based strategy wargame, for parka's sake – it still manages to provide enough thrills and tension to attract unexpected fans. The *Super Play* psychoanalyst suspects there's an element of (ahem) masculine self-gratification in buying and using all those big long guns and shiny rockets, but you've got to have a hobby.

Still, it's not perfect, and I suspect some reviewers will fall for the graphics with insufficient consideration. The menu system isn't as friendly as *FFIII*, and it can take up to an hour of menu-shopping to kit out a full squad of mercenaries. The battles aren't hard once you've sussed the basic tactics, and it's far too easy to buy the most expensive equipment. What's more, you'll see the end of the game after a couple of dedicated weekends. There's no map/territory strategy, no chance to alter the battle order, and the missions only ever involve two sides bashing away until one is annihilated. Having some varied objectives, like taking out a convoy before it leaves the screen, wouldn't have been difficult to include. For all these reasons, *Front Mission* doesn't quite deserve a score in the nineties.

Even so, I'm addicted and playing through for a second time. If Square keeps coming up with games this good, we're in danger of looking biased.

● Zy Nicholson

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
96%	94%	87%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
80%		88%

VERDICT: Not for everyone, agreed, but *Front Mission* is the most playable wargame ever to grace the SNES. It's also the finest game of the year, to date.

METAL GEAR FEVER

If you've been bitten by the assault suits bug, there's a wealth of back catalogue titles that you can choose from to get your fix. Ranging from instant classics to the extremely poor indeed. *Super Play* has dipped into its big bag of nostalgia for a bit of a rummage.

Assault Suits Valken
SUP#5 • 91%

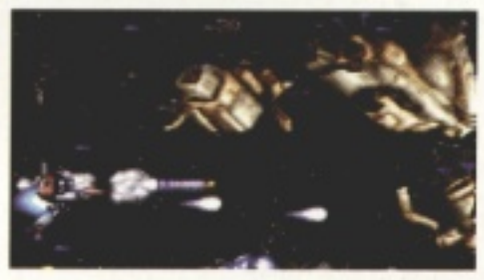
Surely the biggest and best of all the SNES games to feature battle suits. Picked up by Konami for release in the West as *Cybernator*, the game was originally programmed by MASIYA, who have yet to really come up with anything better. A nice feature of *Valken* was that it featured a *Gundam*-like story, that unfolded as the game progressed.

Metal Marines
SUP#18 • 80%

For some strange reason, Namco's fine little strategy wargame got released in the West long before Japan (where it can now be found as *Militia*). No points for guessing where the inspiration for the mobile suits came from (yes, thank you whoever said *Gundam*, at the back), but this is well worth a look.

Macross Scrambled Valkyrie
SUP#15 • 87%

At last, an assault suit from a real series. The Valkyries are capable of 3 modes. As a straight fighter plane, an intermediate (Gerwalk) stage and finally as a full blown mobile suit.



Ganbare Goemon 2
SUP#17 • 90%

Taking its cue (and sound effects) from the early 70s giant robot anime shows (like Gigantor), the huge Impact Goemon Turbo is a real Edo period mobile suit. Relying on his fists, coin throwing and maybe the odd atomic pipe bomb, he was so popular that he makes a return appearance in the recent *Ganbare Goemon 3*.

Final Fantasy III
SUP#26 • 95%

This is more like it. The Magitek armour that regularly makes an appearance in *FFIII*, really does owe a lot to anime mobile suits.

Vortex
SUP#26 • 90%

Finally a British assault suit. Although it doesn't strictly steal from anywhere, it's clear to see where the influence comes from.

And finally, don't try too hard to find...

IMPERIUM – Sup#6 • 40% – A *Gundam* inspired vertical shooter. METAL JACK • 20% – Rubbish scrolling beat-'em-up based on an anime TV series. MECHWARRIOR – Sup#9 • 63% – American's steal anime mech designs in a lukewarm game based on FASA's table-top series. And last of all, any of Banpresto's *SD* series.

NEW TO THE UK

More Japanese Games On The Way!

After a period of relative quiet, our New to the UK section is positively fit to burst. British software houses are beginning to realise that untapped reserves of decent SNES games exist in both Japan and the United States. Buying the European rights and commissioning a translation may not be cheap, but it's a positive bargain when compared with the cost of employing a team of programmers and producing a new game in-house, or hiring the services of a professional game development company.

It's especially reassuring to discover that many of the games which *Super Play* has championed in the past are now more likely to become available in your local games store.

Over the past couple of months *Super Play* has been consulted by several high-profile games companies regarding potential PAL conversions, and we've made every effort to direct them away from the tat and towards the good stuff.

The games being brought over aren't always of the highest quality, alas, but at least we now a greater choice of carts that fit snugly in our PAL SNES slots. Look at the range of game styles on these pages and you'll see what we mean.

The only foreseeable drawback is that a reliance on conversions could starve British 16-bit game developers of some much-needed investment. However, we're hopeful that homegrown programming talent will now be allowed to expand and experiment with new ideas, rather than merely add to the stream of dismally average 'safe bet' platformers that the publishers can pick up effortlessly from abroad.

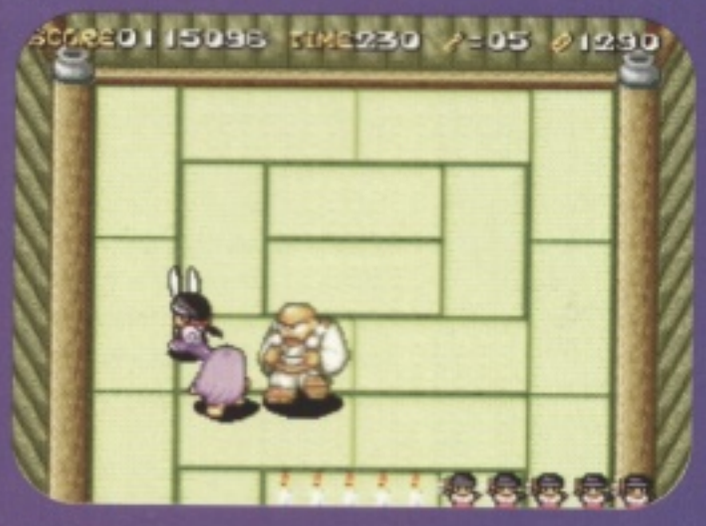
A special little caption box all of its own.

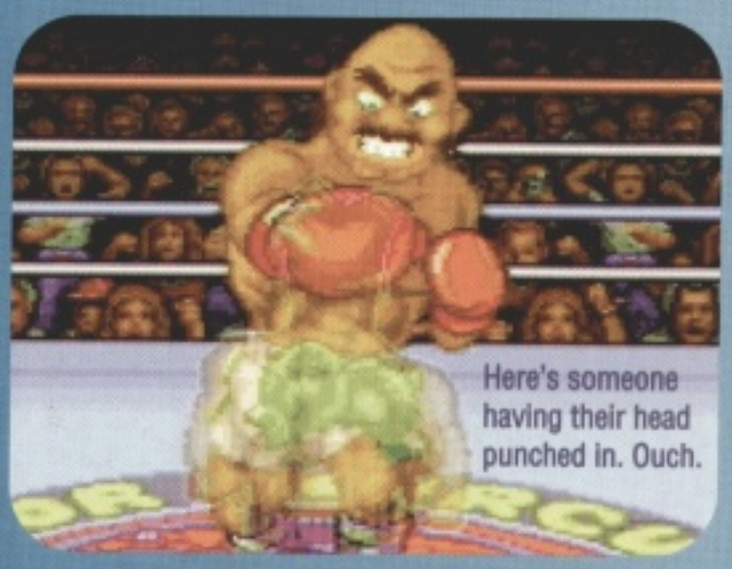
POCKY & ROCKY 2
Ocean/16Mbit/SP 23

Natsume's *Kiki kaikai 2* was our covergame of issue 23, and whilst it wasn't as finger-blisteringly hard as its predecessor (which scored 82%) it thrilled us long enough to warrant a respectably decent score. Ocean's PAL conversion goes under the American title of *Pocky & Rocky 2*, and it has to be said that some of the translation is a little clumsy. Ultimately, though, it's impossible to stop the powerful Japanese aroma seeping from its pores and tempting you with torii gates, raifu missiles, bunny ears and lucky Tanuki statues. The secret treasures, weapon shops and choice of sidekicks make it more than just an overhead shoot-'em-up. Great while it lasts, as the boy Mott put it.

OVERALL SCORE: 79%

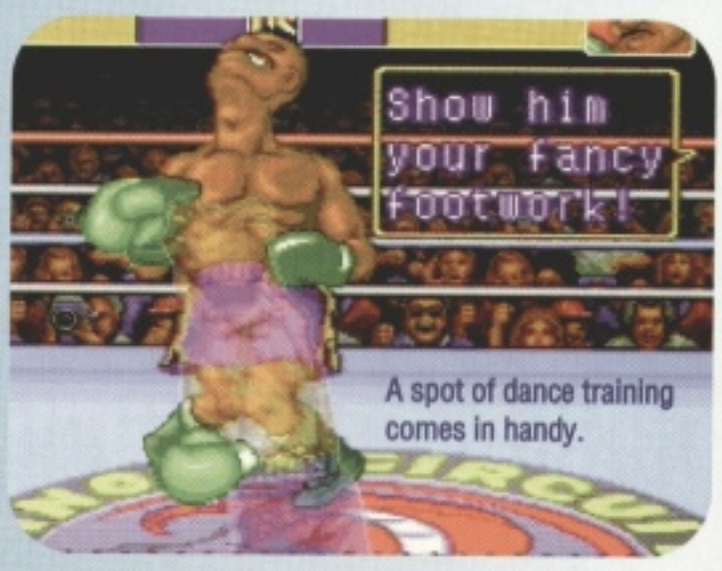
Just to the right there, is a Tanuki. He's a sort of lucky charm over in Japan. The game is packed full of cultural references, so you could swot up on it, if that's your thing. Below: a bald bloke and a purple-rinsed wig.



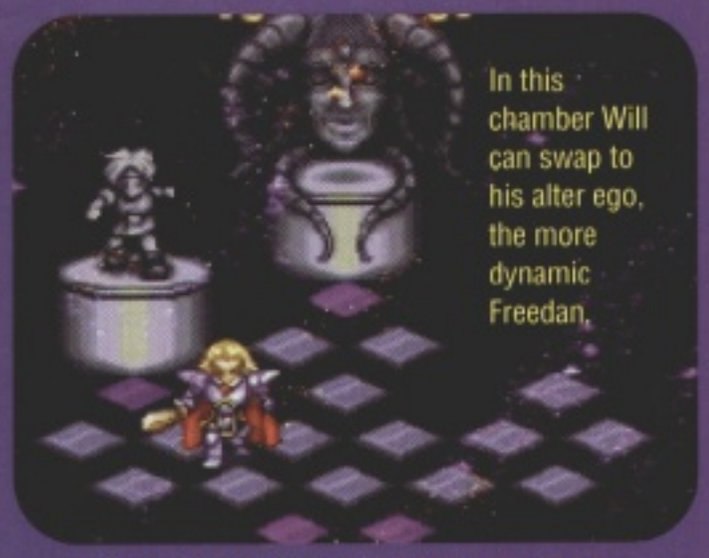


SUPER PUNCH OUT
Nintendo/16Mbit/SP 27

Bizarrely, we've discovered that Nintendo of Japan isn't releasing *Super Punch Out* – an official Nintendo title, note – in its home country. THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN OFTEN. That very fact may have you supposing that it's a bit smelly, but you'd be completely mistaken: unlike almost every other boxing game, *SPO* manages to encompass brutality, comedy and addiction in just one cartridge-shaped funbundle. Block high, block low, look for the holes in your opponent's defence and choose your moment. If you're wondering why something with so simple a premise should fill 16 megabits plus battery back-up, it's because the presentation (including fine speech samples and a comprehensive records table) really makes this a superior incarnation of the arcade original. The boxing game equivalent of *SFII*, no less. As for the Japanese, we can only assume that boxing has about as much cultural relevance to them as Sumo wrestling has to us.



OVERALL SCORE: 90%



ILLUSION OF TIME
Nintendo/16Mbit/SP 26

Besides releasing the games developed officially by Nintendo R&D, the UK branch of Nintendo is now stepping up its policy to make good third-party games available to British gamers. Part of this plan involves signing up RPGs from the two big fish, Square and Enix, and this latest release is none other than the latter's *Illusion of Gaia* (reviewed in *SP26*) in PAL format.

Supposedly a sequel to *Soulblazer* – which also came to the UK recently, courtesy of Ubi-Soft – this action RPG offers more of the same arcade-style broadsword wobbling, although there's the added dimension of a better storyline. Some of the bosses prove quite tough, but experienced players won't experience the greatest of trouble in completing it.

So whilst it may not be another *Zelda* or *Mana*, it's is certainly highly playable and worthy of attention. Not many games feature an NPC piggy, after all.

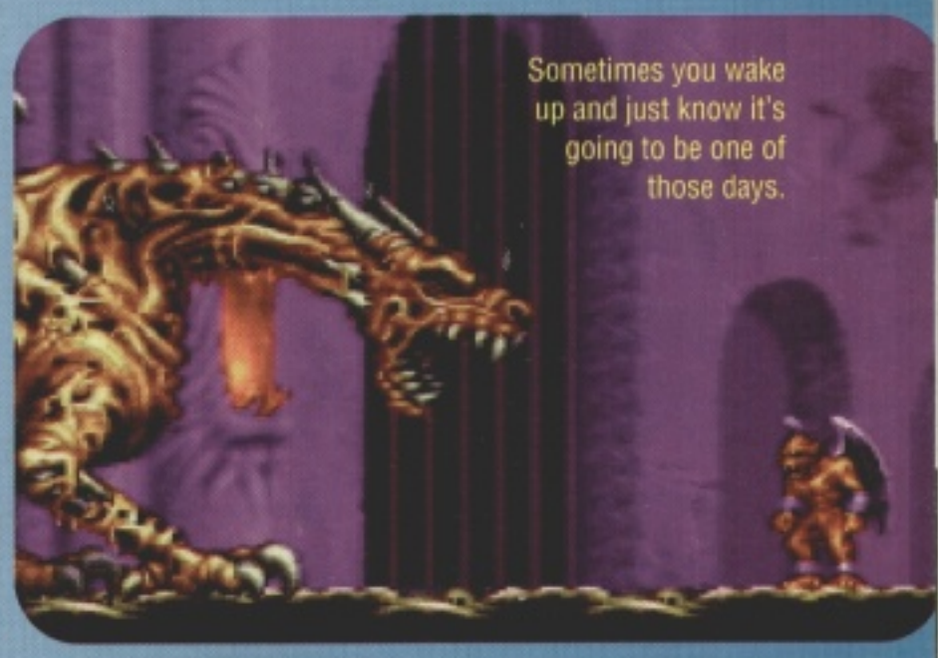
OVERALL SCORE: 88%

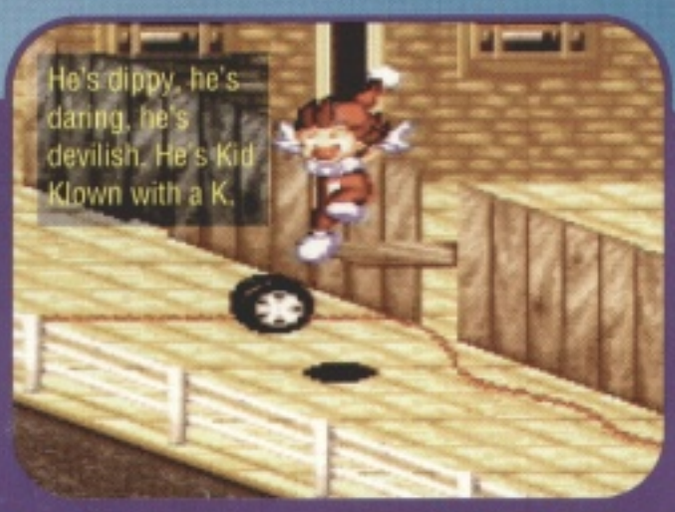
Here we see our brave hero Will actually hitting a switch. Is there no end to this man's talents?

DEMON'S CREST
Marubeni/16Mbit/SP 27

Old hands may recognise the main character from *Demon's Crest* – it's Firebrand the Gargoyle (or Redarema) from Capcom's classic *Ghosts and Goblins* series. Marubeni probably snatched up this game for UK release on the strength of that lineage, which first reached the SNES in the form of *Super Ghouls and Ghosts*. In many ways, *Demon's Crest* (Japanese title: *Demon's Blazon*) captures some of Capcom's earlier glory: the graphics are sumptuous, the bosses are big and tough and the numerous abilities at Redarema's disposal makes for some varied gameplay. At heart it's little more than a platform shoot-'em-up, but it's all done so well that the short lifespan and casual difficulty level is an enormous disappointment. When the credits rolled at what felt like a half-way point, it's fair to say we were gobsmacked. A splendid effort, without a doubt, but not the great game it could have been.

OVERALL SCORE: 80%





KID KLOWN IN KRAZY CHASE
Nintendo/8Mbit/SP 27

This is an odd acquisition for Nintendo, although it may have something to do with the game's unfathomable popularity in Japan. Originally developed by Kemco, *Krazy Chase* echoes an earlier age of gaming in terms of its difficulty, its playing style and its simple concept. Viewed from an isometric perspective, Kid has to run through five levels of pitfalls and obstacles steering left and right to collect the tokens that will allow him to progress. But there's a time limit, and as Kid cannot turn back at any time he has to perform each level perfectly.

The selling point is undoubtedly its animation. Whenever Kid suffers some life-threatening incident, it's portrayed by a beautiful but sadistic sequence that seems lifted straight from a *Road Runner* cartoon. Still funny the third or fourth time, but it won't be long before you (a) get frustrated by them holding up the game, and (b) finish the five (count 'em!) tough but short levels. Slightly over-rated at 80%, but worth a rental nevertheless.

OVERALL SCORE: 80%

NINJA WARRIORS
Titus/16Mbit/SP 20

Coincidentally, this scrolly beat-'em-up was originally programmed by Natsume, the Japanese developer behind *Pocky & Rocky 2*. Their high quality of presentation is apparent from the moment you pick up the pad: play it on a big TV with the volume on 11 whilst standing up and your senses will tell you that you're down the arcade.

There are some superb special moves, a 'rage gauge' and more ninja weapons than Lee Van Cleef ever revealed in ITV's *The Master*. Okay, so maybe it doesn't expand upon the limited nature of the genre, but that original score of 84% was really aimed at fans of the game style anyway.

If you're partial to walking along and hitting things, look at *Ninja Warriors*. It does it very well indeed.

OVERALL SCORE: 84%

Ninja Warriors is absolutely packed with the sorts of characters you wouldn't ever want to meet in a dark alleyway. Actually, when it boils down to it, I don't think I'd much care for the opportunity in broad daylight either.

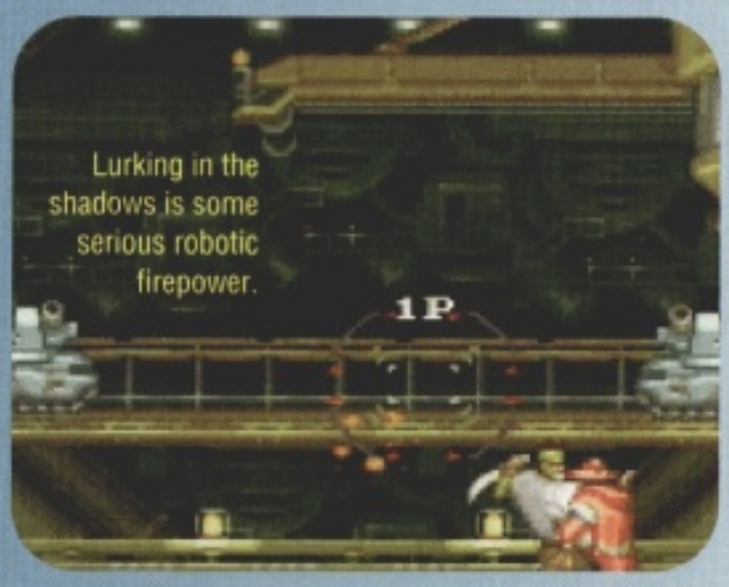
WILD GUNS
Titus/8Mbit/SP 24

As our Allan Brett pointed out in last month's Mode 7, *Wild Guns* is a superior saddlebag of shootage in the *Nam '75* style of roll left, roll right, dodge and then shoot. Or, if you're familiar with the film *Westworld*, it's rather like that, with a cyberpunky feel to it.

One or two players take the roles of either poncho-clad 'Clint' or petticoated 'Annie', the idea being to blast away an odd Japanese mixture involving Western movies and robots. And blow me, if it isn't another game by Natsume.

With the power of hindsight we should admit that The Leach's score is rather generous for a game with so few levels, but as a sight-based shoot-'em-up this works so much better than *T2: Arcade*, *Lethal Enforcers* or any those Super Scope games from the early days of the SNES. Smart.

OVERALL SCORE: 87%

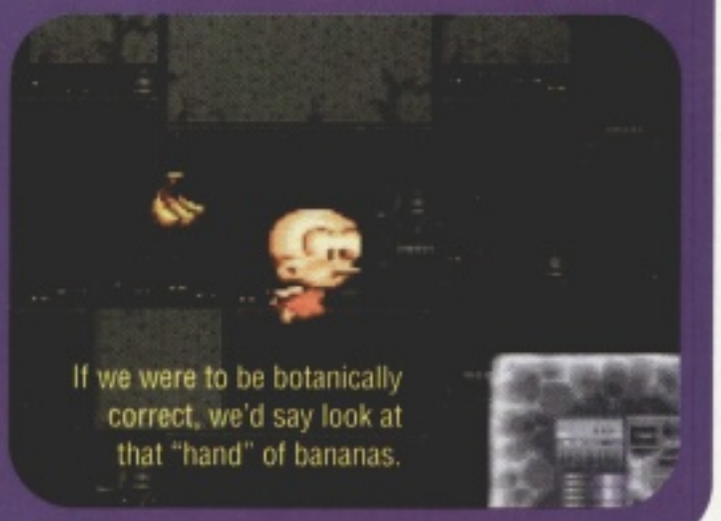


SUPER BC KID
Virgin/8Mbit/SP 24

You wouldn't believe what's going on out back! Changing the name slightly from *Super PC Kid* (the series started on the PC Engine, you see) doesn't disguise the madness that is 'the Kid'. We're quite accustomed to weirdness in Japanese games, but this really is the teabag in the slingback. Let's just say that it's a platformer with ludicrous graphics, unusual settings (the intestines of a huge monster?) and nonsensical shape-changing power-ups – i.e. turn into a crab and you can fly? The only reason we didn't mark it higher was – sigh – that old cost/lastability problem: again, it's not the biggest game in the world. But *Super BC Kid* is a marvellous slice of game pie nevertheless, and serious gamefreaks should at least acquaint themselves with the series. BONK!

OVERALL SCORE: 75%

On the right, there's our little chum all small and defenceless. Or is he? Actually he's more of a crazy psycho, shape-shifting freak.



Ultra 64
comes out fighting

Edge has the first concrete details of the **64bit machine** that could slaughter Nintendo's opposition

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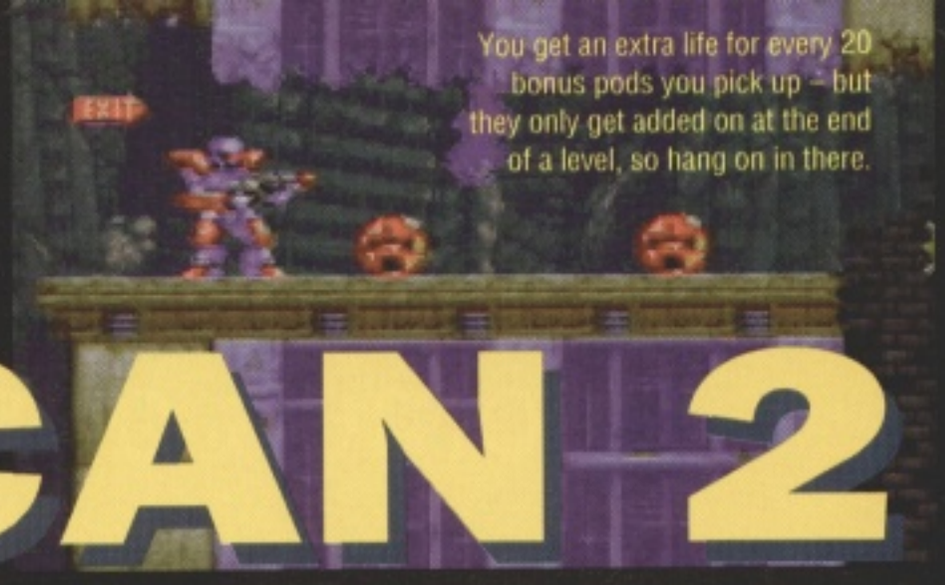
Edge

SUPER TURRICAN 2



You get an extra life for every 20 bonus pods you pick up – but they only get added on at the end of a level, so hang on in there.

I remember a time when all around here was fields. Except for the arcades, of course. And they were full of games just like this one...

Turn your enemy's power against him – bounce your laser pulses up his own energy barrier.

Some levels seem to exist purely for you to wrack up oodles of bonus points, just like this one, coincidentally.

UK Release

Game: Super Turrican 2
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: Factor 5
Price: £49.99
Release: May
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 16 Mbit
Adaptor: None required

YOUR VEHICLE AWAITS...

Trudging your way through hostile alien territories can be hell on your feet. But kiss those bunyans goodbye *(presumably only if you're a contortionist – Ed)* with a handy high-tech conveyance.

Someone's pulled the plug out. This bit's like *Tempest 2000* underwater.

The graphics take a quality nose-dive as speed and action take over in this into-the-screen aerobatics section.

Just when the first level looks like getting a bit dull, you get to drive this smart little buggy. Master the jumping and you can collect loads of bonus points.

Forget snowboarding, metal-bird surfing is the latest totally rad, seriously-smokin', well cool, sorted sport for dudes with baggy pants and daft woollen hats.

NOT WITHOUT A PASS, MATE

There are more bosses in *Super Turrican 2* than a badly-run section civil service. I blame it on middle management.

Remind me to have a word with the architect.

"You have 20 seconds to comply... or else I'll tell me Dad."

Claws 4 – definitely a red menace with a loony left hook.

"It's going to take quite a few fillings. I'd seriously suggest you cut back on the armoured space heroes in future."

Watch out for low-flying asteroids here. (Doesn't the front of that sub look as if it's got a smiley face?)

Remind you of something? *Axelay*, perhaps? And there's nothing wrong in that. Unless you hold the copyright to *Axelay*, I suppose.

ARMED TO THE TEETH

Beam: this slice of sci-fi high tech weaponry stays with you at all times. It temporarily immobilises anything it hits. You can fire it horizontally, or in a pretty spectacular arc.

Grappling arm: another trusty companion, the grappling arm enables Turrican to scale walls and swing along ceilings.

Spread Gun: look out for the green crystal if you want a weapon which sprays laser death in a wide arc. As you do. Sometimes. But not when you're in Sainsbury's because you'll get banned.

Laser: collect a blue crystal to arm yourself with a truly mighty hunk of laser warfare. It looks dead pretty as well.

Missiles: most of your weapons only have a narrow horizontal range. These heat-seeking missiles, however, let you blast the parts that other weapons cannot reach.

Rebounder: grab yourself a yellow crystal and watch those laser pulses go bouncing all over the place. Once you get used to its idiosyncrasies, this weapon can be one of the best in your arsenal.

Flame Thrower: red crystals give you 450 sts (slices of toast per second) firepower. But this one's the only weapon that doesn't shoot continuously if you hold the fire button down, so keep jabbing.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

The 80s revival is here. With Duran Duran and the Human League back in the charts and a new *Turrican* game out on the SNES all you need to complete the illusion is a wedge haircut and plastic addidas sports bag.

Old-fashioned? Retro chic? Nostalgic? Unoriginal? Yep, *Super Turrican 2* is all of these. Sure, this time around it's an 'original' game in that the levels are all-new designs, and there are a couple of bits that have been included just to give Mode 7 a work-out, but there's not much here that doesn't look or feel like the arcade blasters that were around when Zammo McGuire was still in Grange Hill.

But is there anything intrinsically wrong in that? Frankly, no. *Super Turrican 2* might show its roots, but at least they're roots worth showing.

This is good, solid, well-designed gaming based on years on proven playability. A blaster-by-numbers perhaps, but at least the numbers add up to something substantial. And not just in terms of the sheer number of levels.

One of the main points in the game's favour is variety. Essentially a sci-fi platform shoot-'em-up, it keeps the gameplay fresh by constantly reinventing itself. Unlike some blasters, it doesn't just change the backgrounds; different levels require different skills. On some you have to take things slowly, others require skill and timing, while others are straightforward run-like-hell-with-your-finger-on-the-fire-button affairs.

The addition of a number of different vehicles, an impressive range of power-ups and several into-the-screen Mode 7 sections also keep the interest level riding high. And it's all wrapped up in high quality (though rarely stunning) graphics and superbly utilised sound effects.

It's a shame there's no password system. Okay, so it's supposed to be reproducing the feel of those old arcade blasters, but it's downright irritating having to play the game from the beginning every time. Then again, the game isn't the most challenging you'll ever come across, with plenty of chances to wrack up extra lives, so hardened gameplayers won't be restarting too often. It demands a range of gameplaying techniques, but it never stretches them too much.

At the end of the day (or considerably sooner on the Easy setting) *Super Turrican 2* is a hugely playable romp that stands up better than a whole load of recent film licence conversions I could mention. Ah, they don't make 'em like this any more.

● Dave Golder

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
84%	88%	77%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
78%		84%

VERDICT: It's a bit like the new Elastica album – forget originality and enjoy a load of old clichés done with energy and style. Short-lived but intense gaming action.

WIN WIN WIN!

Enter our easy competition and win a fantastic all-terrain remote control racer, a Super Turrican flak jacket and a copy of Super Turrican 2!

DESIGN YOUR OWN COMBAT VEHICLE AND WIN...

PRIZES

FIRST PRIZE THE MANTA RAY: HIGH PERFORMANCE OFF ROAD RACER WITH REMOTE CONTROLLERS, SUPER TURRICAN FLAK JACKET AND SUPER TURRICAN 2

SECOND PRIZE – SUPER TURRICAN FLAK JACKET AND SUPER TURRICAN 2

THIRD PRIZE X 5 – SUPER TURRICAN 2

Yes, those kind chaps at Ocean have decided to celebrate the release of *Super Turrican 2* with a top competition. So, you won't just have to take our word for what a great game *Super Turrican 2* is, you'll be able to play it for yourself.

Not only that, if you win first or second prize you'll be able to wear a limited edition *Super Turrican* flak jacket while you're playing it, although you might get a bit hot and sweaty should you choose to do so. The jacket comes in more handy, however, if you win our top prize of a remote control all-terrain Manta Ray, er, just like the one that isn't driven by Turrican himself, er, but it's a bit like it, and we couldn't find one, but we did try and... and... and...

Anyway you'll now have good reason to actually go outdoors and get yourself some fresh air and wear The Jacket. It's a fantastic prize. It comes in kit form, so obviously you'll need a bit of patience to put it together, but Ocean have supplied everything you'll need to make the jacket, sorry, get the Manta Ray off-road racer up and running.

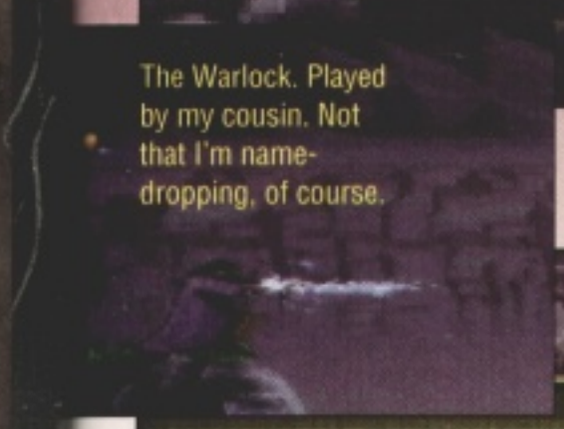
To stand a chance of winning is all you have to do is send in your own design of an multi-weaponed all terrain vehicle – the kind of thing you might find in *Super Turrican 2*. If they're good, we may even print some. And... basically, the best ones win. Get painting.

Send your designs in to: I reckon I can draw, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. The closing date is Thursday 4 May. And the editor takes great delight in adding that other people in the office who are currently coveting the prize can take their beady eyes off it.

WIN WIN WIN!

WARLOCK

'Beware the ultimate evil'. That's what it says on the box. It may as well have said 'beware of luvvie relatives you only see at Christmas'.



The Warlock. Played by my cousin. Not that I'm name-dropping, of course.

Some of the action takes place in space. How bizarre.

UK Release

Game: Warlock
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Realtime
Price: £TBA
Release: Out now
Players: One
Cart ROM: 16 Mbits

If you get a few shots off at my dad's nephew, he'll vanish in an electrical storm, as here. Can't help feeling guilty, though.

OPEN FIRE

A magic blaster is the weapon you start with. A couple of shots usually do the trick on man-sized targets (except my blood-relative, of course), but the best thing about it is that it looks marvellous. Wait until you see some of the collectibles, though (not shown here, because we couldn't find them in time).

My bloody cousin
This is my cousin. Can you spot the family resemblance? I can, of course.

The spider attack
In a weird foretaste of *Arachnophobia*, Jules sends a big spider to attack you. Run away or shoot it? The choice is yours...

You'll be spewed from the ground
If you're unlucky to walk near the plant-life, it grabs you, drags you underground, nicks loads of health off you and spews you back out. Ho hum.

It was a lovely day in Warlock-land. Who was to know how hideous it would all soon turn, eh?

Not only can he destroy worlds, but he can make everything red as well. Boo.

JULIAN SANDS – A FILMOGRAPHIC APPRAISAL BY ME.

1. *The Killing Fields*
Not bad, although he wasn't in it much.
2. *Room With a View*
Great film, great performance (although the nude bit puts me off).
3. *Gothic*
Excellent. And he wasn't bad in it, either.
4. *Arachnophobia*
Haven't seen it. But my dad (Julian's uncle) likes it and says our lad wasn't bad.
5. *Siesta*
A load of rubbish. Our family'll do anything for money.

Left: Julian Sands' cousin.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Let's get some of the obvious questions out of the way first. *Warlock* is an ancient film – out in the 80s, and we're now nearer to the 00s. Why so late with the game? Second thing, if the game has taken so long, why isn't it a great deal better than this?

Right. Well, in the game you are a druid warrior, charged with finding six runestones before the evil Warlock can. Get to them first and you save the world. This would indicate that there are six levels, and, as you'd expect, there are magical power-ups which you can collect on the way. Health restoration, smart-bombs and so on are all here.

And into the quest we go, whereupon it turns out to be a standard platformer, with the aforementioned magic spells to make it 'different'. What a pity. What a tragedy, in fact. You see, I had high hopes for *Warlock* for two reasons. First, the film is widely acknowledged as the best motion picture ever made, with a stunning performance from the leading mega-super-star, Julian Sands, and second, Julian Sands, patently the biggest talent in Hollywood ever, is my first cousin.

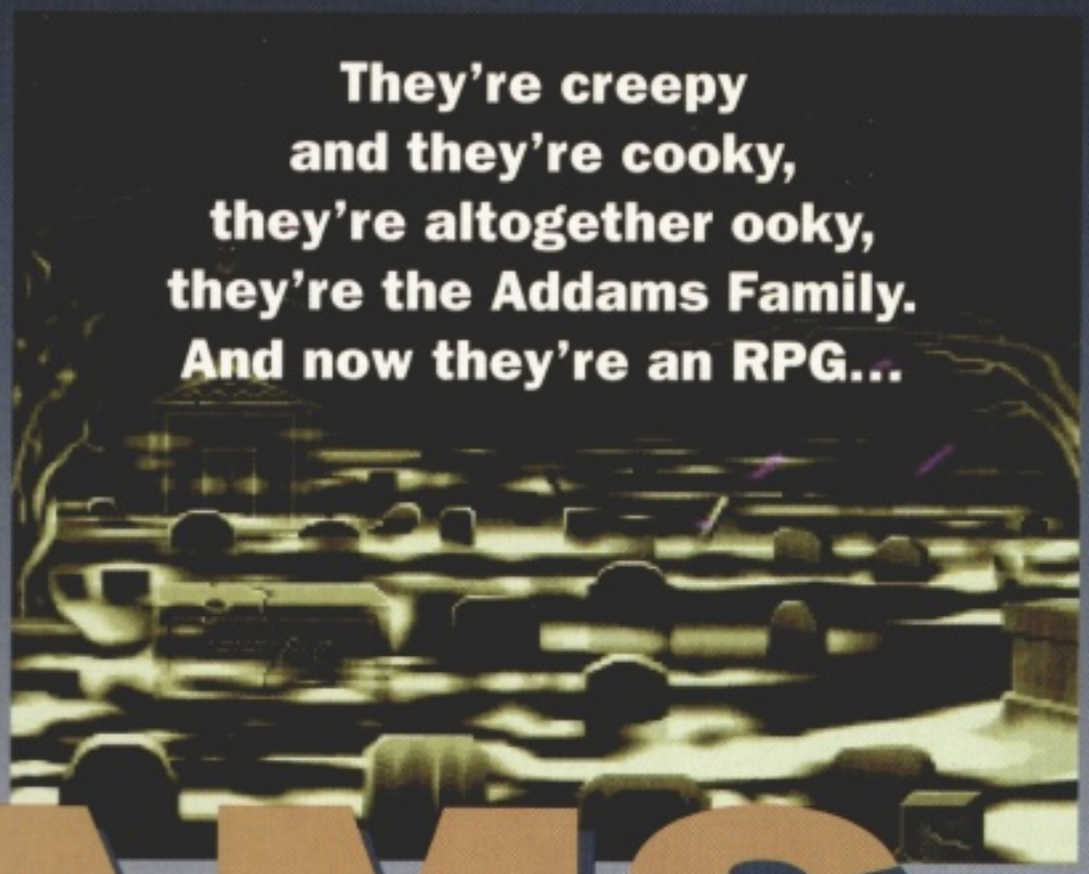
A dilemma is posed. Imagine reviewing a game based on a film starring *your* cousin? Could you be impartial? Could you remain aloof and give it an unbiased judgement? I thought I'd have problems, but when I saw the boring nonsense contained within this cartridge, my reviewing instincts took over and I rushed to the nearest open lav.

Sadly, *Warlock* is a dull, unimaginative platform game with a fireball weapon, a few puny spells and the odd floating ghost-type baddy to make it less tedious. Some of the background graphics are nice, and there are a couple of neat sprite-tricks, but that's your lot. The film, on the other hand, is a tour de force, making *Apocalypse Now*, *Citizen Kane*, *Goodfellas* and *Jurassic Park* look like the work of fumbling amateurs. Did I mention that Julian Sands is my cousin?

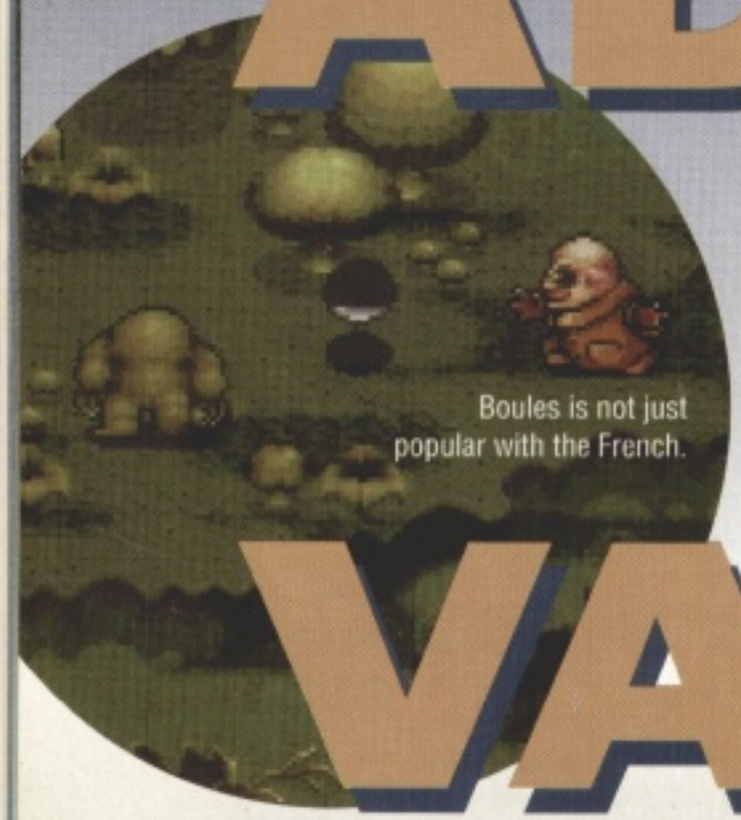
● James Leach

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
76%	58%	59%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
62%		68%

VERDICT: No, really, don't bother. Save your money and rent the film loads of times. Presumably Julian still gets a cut every time the film is hired out, so get your friends to rent it too.



ADDAMS FAMILY VALUES


Boules is not just popular with the French.

Later on in the game you come across the spider's missing eye. Replace it and see what happens...

Anti-cupid, apparently.

UK Release

Game: Addams Family Values
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: In-house
Price: £49.99
Release: April
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 12 Mbits
Adaptor: any

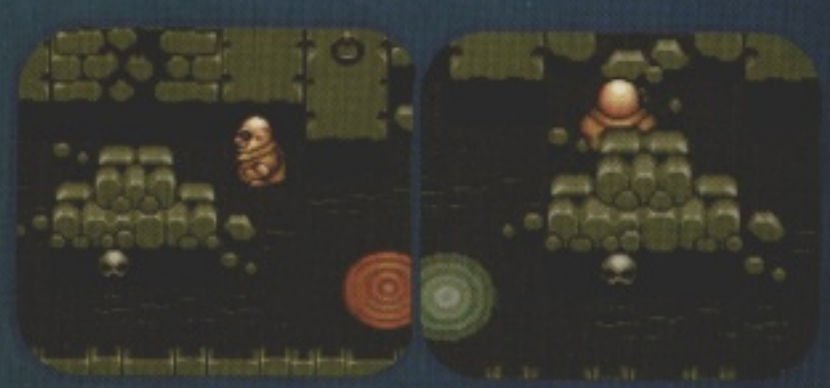
SIMILARITIES UNINTENDED

Being the seasoned old N-gamers that this job demands, we couldn't help but feel a little déjà vu when confronted by some of the creatures in the vicinity of Addams Mansion.

An overhead version of the aggressive flowers in *Mario*, n'est-ce pas?

The ghosts like to materialise right next to you. Rather like the little hooded wizards in *Zelda*, methinks.

Jellyfish? You know the programmer is up on his Jap games when jellyfish make an out-of-water appearance.


As in *Zelda* and *Metroid*, certain items like Lurch's Bowling Ball open up new rooms and treasures in dungeons you've already explored.

A section of the greenhouse level, complete with tumbling plants and spooky pumpkins. David Bellamy would indeed be proud.

The end-of-level plant in the greenhouse. Vicious.

Of Paramount Importance

Creating a game based on characters owned by a large American movie corporation has its difficulties. The mere fact that Ocean had an easier time dealing with Nintendo says it all.

Despite the programmer's wishes, Fester wasn't allowed to place a lightbulb in his mouth and light it up. It might encourage children to follow suit, they thought. So a firefly in a jar must suffice for illumination.

'Why can't Cousin It speak in the game?' they asked the programmer. 'Because he never says anything more than meepmeepmeep.' he replied, being au fait with the series. 'Pronounce that for me, would you?' 'Er, meepmeepmeep,' he obliged, somewhat embarrassed.

Those evil old ladies' swimming hats will be sorry they were ever invented when this ball hits them.

Oh-ho. The gatekeeper. Nothing that a few well-placed blasts of Cousin It's special lightning bolt will see off.

The caterpillar likes to dash back and forth on a screen full of mushrooms. One for the nostalgia fans?

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

For all their good points, long-awaited games can often prove disappointing. It might be encouraging that Ocean's third *Addams Family* SNES licence dispenses with the platform formula and adopts an RPG style far more impressive and multi-faceted than, say, Westwood's *Young Merlin* or Interplay's *Lord of the Rings*. But is that enough? Having wrestled with my conscience for rather too much of your time, I should proceed post-haste to explain why I believe it doesn't quite cut it.

Ultimately, *Addams Family Values* falls down on two issues. The first thing you'll notice is that there's a little too much wandering about, even when you've opened up the teleports of the Trans Mansion Express. Just getting a password requires you to head into the danger-fraught swamps to look for Cousin It. It's alright when you know where you're going, but in the early stages of the game the exploration required soon becomes a drag. You'll find nothing but confusion in the map screens of your journal, too.

Second, Fester is a bit of a plodder. Given the profusion of annoyingly efficient monsters that roam the grounds of the Addams Mansion, you long to control a warrior-athlete capable of clearing a swathe through the vermin with a single axe-sweep or shotgun blast. Instead, you have at your disposal a small lardy slaphead who can't even be turned around to face his foe without actually moving a few pixels closer to it. Worse, the strength and range of Fester's basic zzap! attack decreases in proportion to his health: if you get into trouble then things can go from bad to worse very quickly. And because all the weapons fly from Fester's right hand, you can easily miss a small tricky monster even though it appears you're lined up exactly.

The result is that you play with thorough caution, finding a safe spot to sit and wait until a monster inadvertently blunders into your weapon range. It makes the game even slower to play through, and that's not fun.

In many respects *AFV* is very good, and the unique graphical style has a curious attraction. Indeed, in my cynically twisted view it's easily a better long-term buy than *Spectre*, *Super Morph*, *Uniracers* or any of the other briefly-amusing efforts that our reviewers have marked so generously. But as so much of it involves wandering around being attacked by monsters, and as that aspect of the game is the least enjoyable, it follows that you'll need an awful lot of patience and perseverance to claw the truffles from its muddy gameplay.

● Zy Nicholson

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
86%	62%	70%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	75%
83%		

VERDICT: Gomez and his flashing blade might have served better than Fester for the action elements, but the action puzzle/RPG hardcore will find it worth a delve.

DIRT RAC

UK Release

Game: Dirt Racer SFX
Publisher: Elite
Developer: Motivetime
Price: £49.99
Release: End of August
Players: 1-2 simultaneously
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

They come along with depressing rarity. No, not funny BBC sitcoms, great southern England football teams or intelligent barstaff. We're talking Super FX games...

The car select screen, with rotating vehicles. I'm sure that Nintendo insists that one of these appears in every Super FX title.

Each course is divided into sections, marked by numbers. Er, just like these little number '1' markers. You really think this is easy, don't you?

A FIVE COURSE MEAL

For each stage, the game offers three circuit tracks, one stunt track and one puzzle track. And this is what they entail...

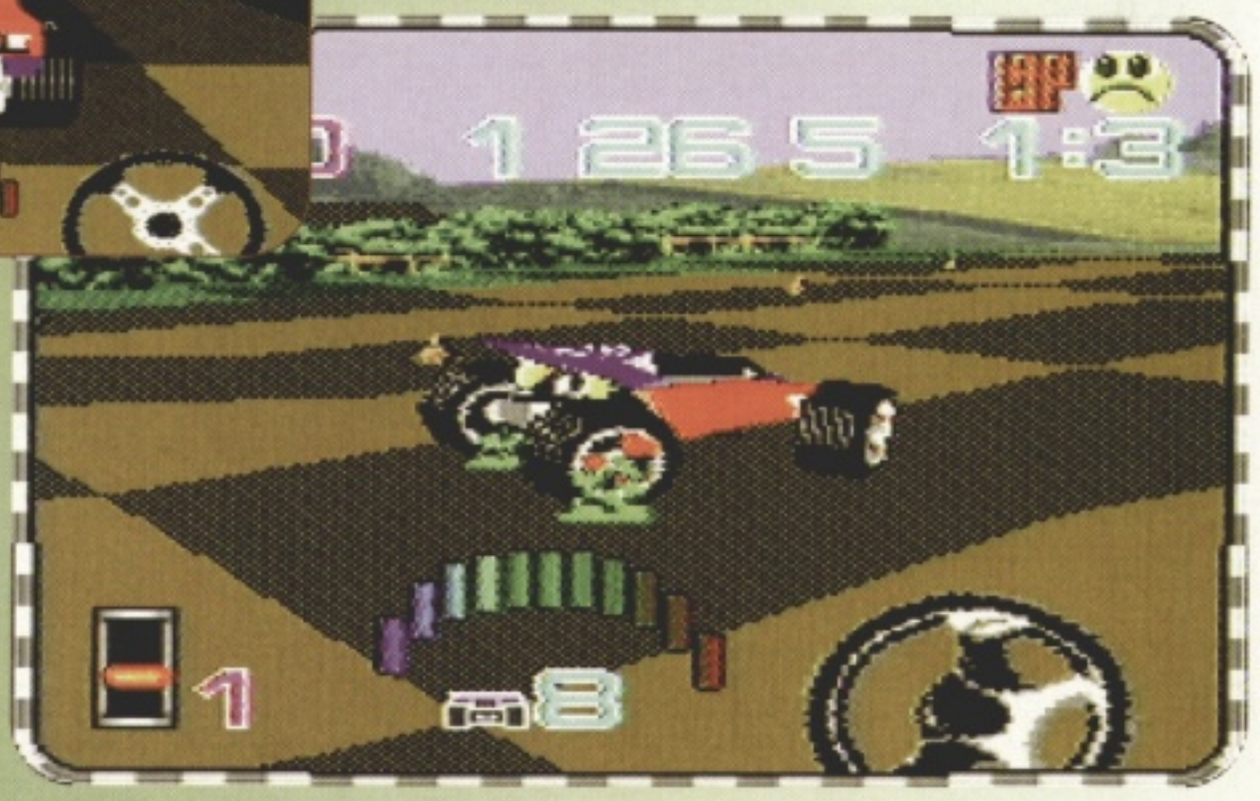
The standard race tracks offer varying numbers of laps. The main gripe levelled at all of the sections is especially relevant here: you only get one opposing car. So it's a straight head-to-head, and a bit dull.

The 'stunt' tracks can hardly be deemed stuntworthy at all, as it happens. Made up of predominantly hilly terrain, they leave little room for the ridiculously outrageous behaviour encouraged by *Stunt Race FX*.

The last type of track is rather an odd one, and hardly the norm in racing games. Faced with numbered 'gates' you have to track down each in turn and activate them before your opponent. Easy.

At the start of the race things look promising. First impressions, etc.

Aaargh! It's the Chevrons from Hell! These will become the bane of every *Dirt Racer*'s life. You'll see.



Believe it or not, those wee, inconspicuous-looking rocks will stop you dead in your tracks. How silly.

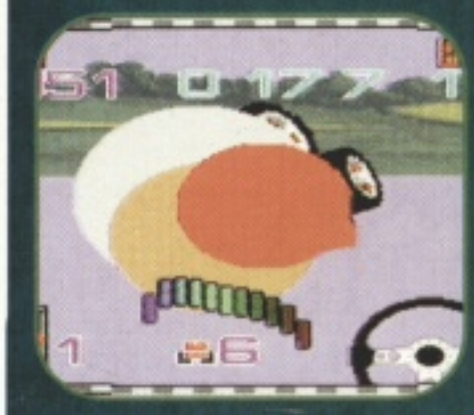
ER SFX

More luvverly undercarriage texture-mapping. Hey, it's a much underrated detail, y'know.

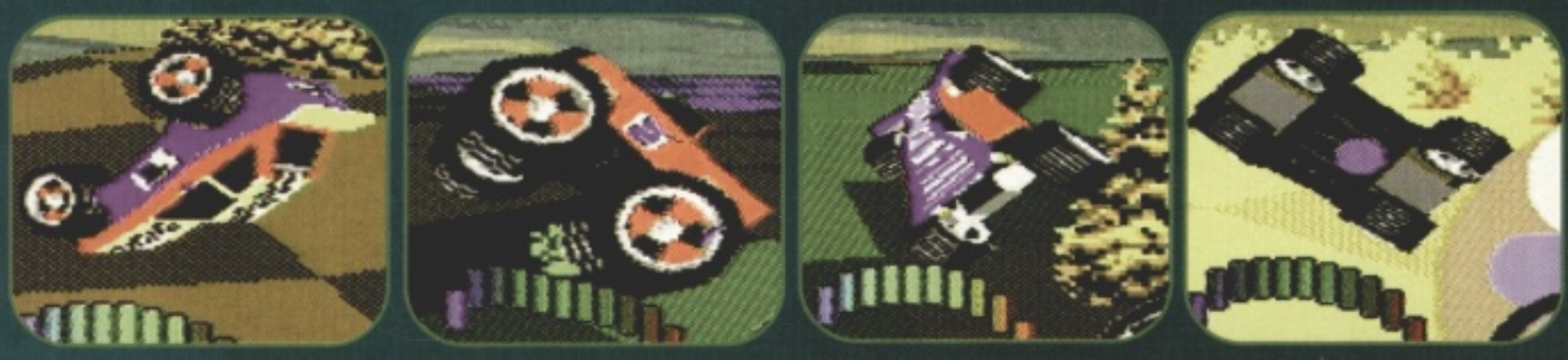
'Mercy, that was head on!' Write in with the game which featured that speech and win a footpump.

KERRUNCH!

The basic driving action in *Dirt Racer* is, well, a bit dull. So let's show some of the game's brighter – and, it must be said, more common – moments, crashes. Fender bending at its finest...



As Zy craftily pointed out, explosions take on a bizarre, Anglia TV logo appearance. He shows his age sometimes.



The great thing about rolls and crashes is that they demonstrate the super texture-mapping that appears on vehicles' undersides.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

It pains me to admit it, but I'm not very good at *Dirt Racer*. I've played it. And played it. And I still can't enter a race with the confidence of a chap who found *Mario Kart* and *Stunt Race FX* relative breezes. It's not just me, either – I've yet to see anyone not career, careen and, inevitably, crash all over the place when they play it.

It's tricky because it feels more like a simulation than a game. This is borne out by the evidence elicited during the title sequence: 'based on an original simulation by so and so'. Approach it as 'just another driving game' (which everyone does) and you'll spend more time spinning than the fair maiden out of Rumplestiltskin did.

Beyond the awkward initial driving sensation there lie more serious problems, the worst of which, rather amazingly, could have been fairly easily rectified. Because the SFX chip is calculating an undulating landscape made up of tiles, processing time is tied up to the degree where approaching course objects (barriers, cones, etc) can only be drawn when they come within a fairly close range. This means that unlike *SRFX*, where upcoming course features are always within comfortable sighting distance, you continually fly blind into corners with little knowledge of their existence (until, that is, you play each track to death and learn the layouts off pat – a wholly unreasonable requirement in a console racing game). The solution to this is simple – an on-screen map, just like *SRFX*'s.

Instead of a map, arrows appear in the driving window, serving to point you in the right direction (obviously). But at speeds exceeding 100 Km/h it's still bloody hard work taking corners, because simple arrow indicators are so limited they're never going to match having a map at your side. What makes the system especially unhelpful is that the arrows' appearances are tied to the dead centre of the track. So, stray too far to the left on a straight and an arrow will pop up – not because there's a corner coming up yet, but because you're not following the exact line. Naturally, you prepare for the corner that doesn't arrive. It's awfully unwieldy, and you'll have to maintain Pope-like levels of forgiveness to get used to it.

Tied to the SFX screen update deficiency is the general lack of speed that the game manages to convey – even at 160 Km/h it rarely generates cheek-clenching levels of excitement. And the two player split screen mode is as disappointing as *SRFX*'s, something that couldn't have been avoided.

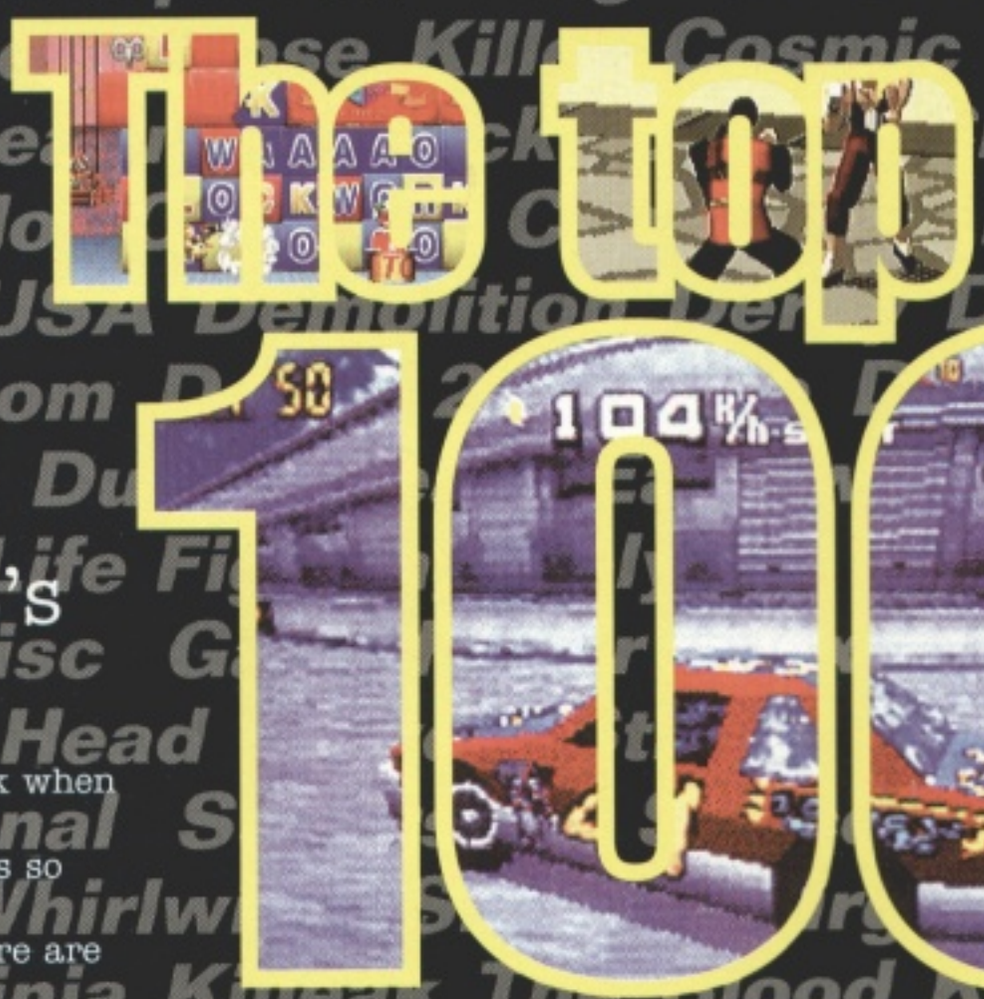
In *Dirt Racer*'s favour are the splendidly designed vehicles themselves, each resplendent with colourful texture-mapped livery; the puzzle track concept, which makes a pleasant change from driving round circuits; and that it's a hugely challenging game. Certainly, those wishing for a more realistic driving game after the likes of *Street Racer* with find solace here (although I can't help feeling that their number is rather small).

What you lose with *Dirt Racer*'s realism is fun, pure and simple. Any developer approaching SNES games with unorthodox ideas has my full backing, but those ideas have to be supported by concrete gameplay, and that's what's amiss here, sadly.

● Tony Mott

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
82%	71%	50%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	51%
71%		

VERDICT: It's a shame that *Dirt Racer* be compared to *Stunt Race FX*, but it's an inevitable comparison, and it comes off worse on just about every count. Only budding rally drivers/ram raiders really need apply.



The top 100 games of the future...

What's the point in looking back when the future is so bright? There are over 100 games that'll make you drool. We have them all.

Also in this issue:

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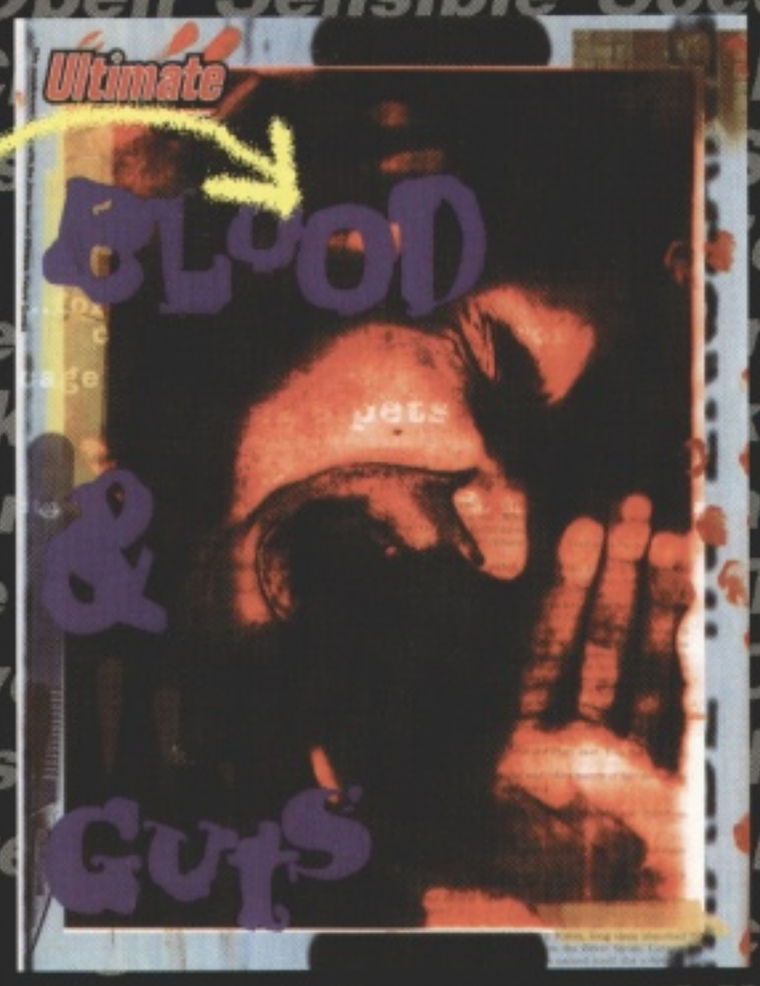

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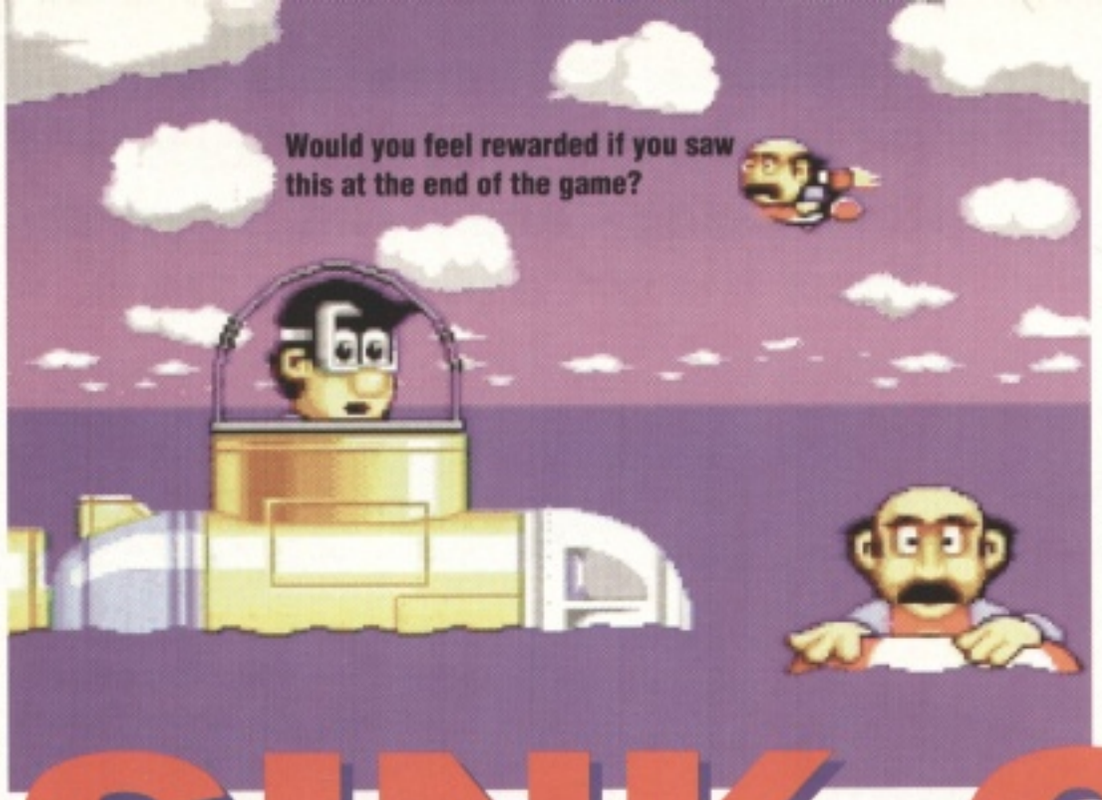


"Ich bin watar in die engine room, mein Capitan!" "Zut alors, dive dive, schnell!" And all that...

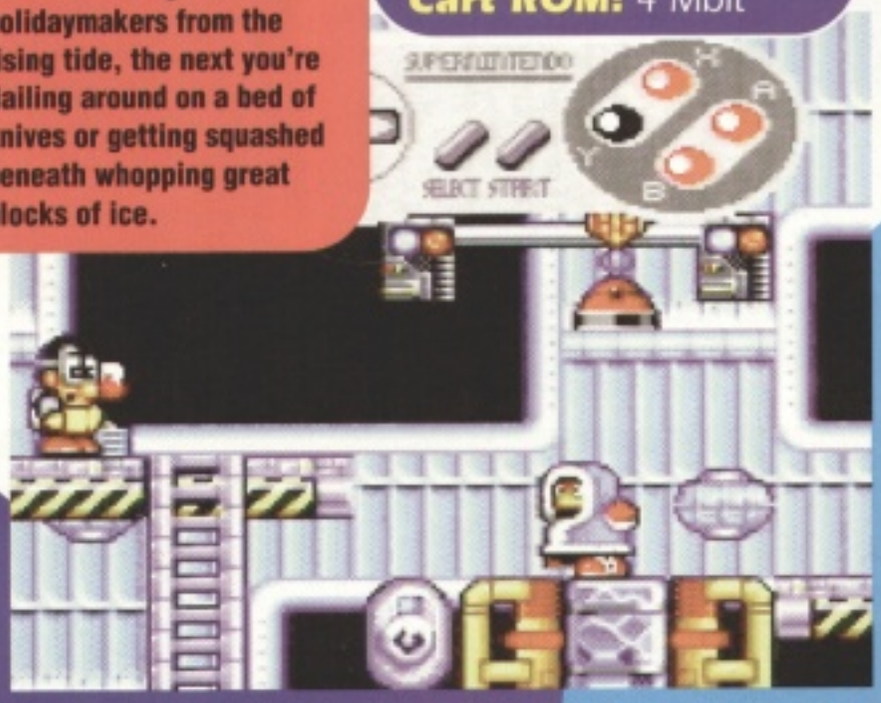
SINK OR SWIM

UK Release

Game: Sink or Swim
Publisher: Titus
Developer: Merit
Price: £39.99
Release: May
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

OI, WATCH OUT!

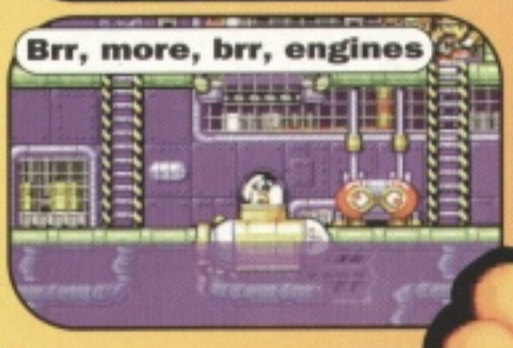
Ships are dangerous places, don't you know. One minute you're rescuing holidaymakers from the rising tide, the next you're flailing around on a bed of knives or getting squashed beneath whopping great blocks of ice.



The training mode is just too brief.

ATTENTION ALL DECKS!

100 levels there might be, but there's only five types of background. And here they are...



Watch out, I have a burm...

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Retro Central, here we come. Again. After surfacing some while back on all things Sega under the Satanic pseudonym *SS Lucifer*, the SNES version of this cutesome puzzle-em-up ends up looking (and sounding) so very dated. Like the conversion of Magic Boy, there's no escaping the fact that there's something so Amigoid about it.

Sink or Swim, as it's been catchily renamed (S.O.S., uh, geddit?) is *Krusty's Fun House* with bucketloads of brine. You've been sent in with your oiliest flippers to clear a sinking liner of staff and vacation-makers, who wander like decapitated hens around its 100 levels. In each section, you must guide an alloted number of victims to the exit, by altering their route. A variety of methods have to be employed, including planting bombs to access certain platforms, dishing out scuba gear, controlling conveyor belts and sealing broken pipes which spew out gas (in the true tradition of sinking ships everywhere).

Trouble is, after solving the initial ten levels or so, you realise that there's a glaring lack of variety in there. The impressive amount of levels have been divided into five distinct sections (with the resulting change in backdrops), but by the 15th of each, you realise you've seen it all somewhere before. That's not to say the puzzles don't change – there's the odd fiendish little number, and you only get a password every five of these.

It pains me to say it, but this undoubtedly is more suited to the pubic hair-free of the videogaming fraternity (what with its big, bright graphics, straightforward gameplay and simplistic problem-solving), but that's not to let the programmers off lightly. For a start the music's awful – the twangliest, spangliest pieces of aural pump that go on and on... Then there's the training mode – if you're going to put one in, try including more than three examples (especially if it's aimed at those fresh to the genre). And, on the version we had, when one too many of the rescuees dies, you have to wait until the rest die or commit suicide in order to start again. Not good.

● Marcus Hawkins

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
44%	20%	76%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
60%		55%

VERDICT: Although it handles very nicely and a bit of thought has been invested in some of the level designs, it's not really doing anything new or pushing the barriers back. I know I'd be sorely disappointed if I'd bought this.

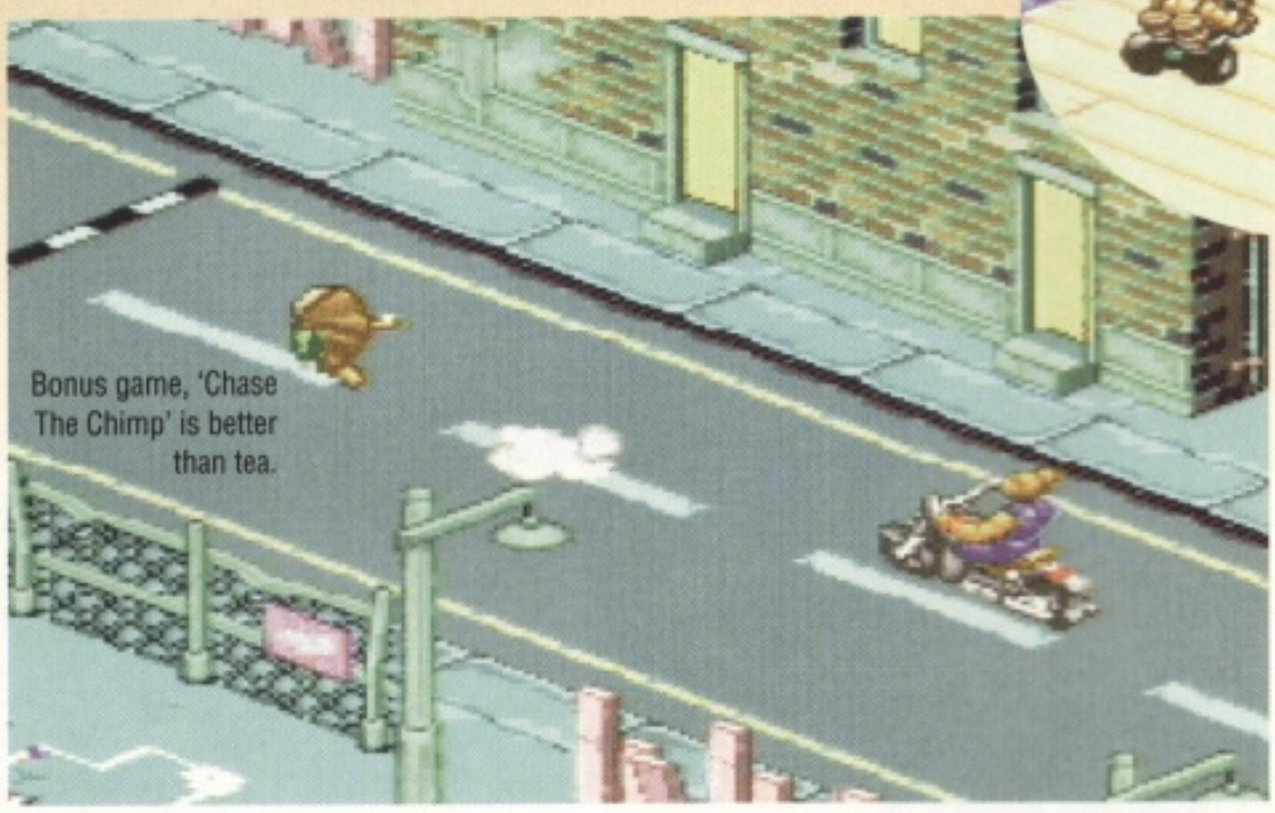
BIKER MICE FROM MARS

It's mice. It's bikes. It's Mars (kind of). It's a bit like Rock 'n' Roll Racing – and... and... hey, at least it's not a platform game.

UK Release

Game: Biker Mice from Mars
Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Price: £54.99
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2
Cart ROM: 16 Mbit

Thanks to Game Zone (Birmingham 021 778 2009) for the loan of the cart.



Bonus game, 'Chase The Chimp' is better than tea.

Fat boy likes his bikey-wike.

Mice Fact. Mice can actually die from earache.

"WE ARE THE, ER, MICE!"

NAME: THROTTLE
MAX SPEED: 396 KPH
ATTACK: TORNADO SHOT
SPECIAL ABILITY: POWER DRIFT

THROTTLE

The leader.
Looks a bit like – Matt Dillon in *Rumblefish* (the bit at the end).
Favourite cheese – Primula.
Special attack – 'Tornado Shot' (prettily flings enemies up in the air).
Winning phrase – "It's a skirting-board out there. Go powder your ears, babe."

NAME: MODO
MAX SPEED: 424 KPH
ATTACK: BIONIC CRASH
SPECIAL ABILITY: SKY-HI SLIDE

MODO

A bit of a bully-boy on a hard-looking chopper bike thing.
Looks a bit like – Dennis Hopper (in *Easy Rider* not *Blue Velvet).*
Favourite cheese – Stilton.
Special attack – 'Bionic Crash' (does a weird, skiddy tackle thing).
Winning phrase – "You are man, I am mouse."

NAME: VINNIE
MAX SPEED: 352 KPH
ATTACK: SHOOTING STAR
SPECIAL ABILITY: TORNADO THIRL

VINNIE

A shifty, weaselish type. Rides a *Road Rash* bike. With a windscreen.
Looks a bit like – An anaemic Brer Rabbit.
Favourite cheese – Happy Shopper cheese spread (with chives).
Special attack – 'Shooting Star' (jumps up and lands on opponent's head).
Winning phrase – "Your mother pimps for voles."

NAME: LIMBURGER
MAX SPEED: 449 KPH
ATTACK: PLUTARKIAN BEAM
SPECIAL ABILITY: ANTI-GRAV DASH

LIMBURGER

The boss of the bad guys. Apparently. Hey. Watch the cartoon.
Looks a bit like – Christopher Biggins.
Favourite cheese – Venusian Stinkfist.
Special attack – 'Plutarkian Beam' (bores enemies with 'beat' poetry).
Winning phrase – "I may have big bones, but you, sir, sweat spit."

NAME: GREASE PIT
MAX SPEED: 483 KPH
ATTACK: GREASE GUN
SPECIAL ABILITY: CORNER CRASH

GREASE PIT

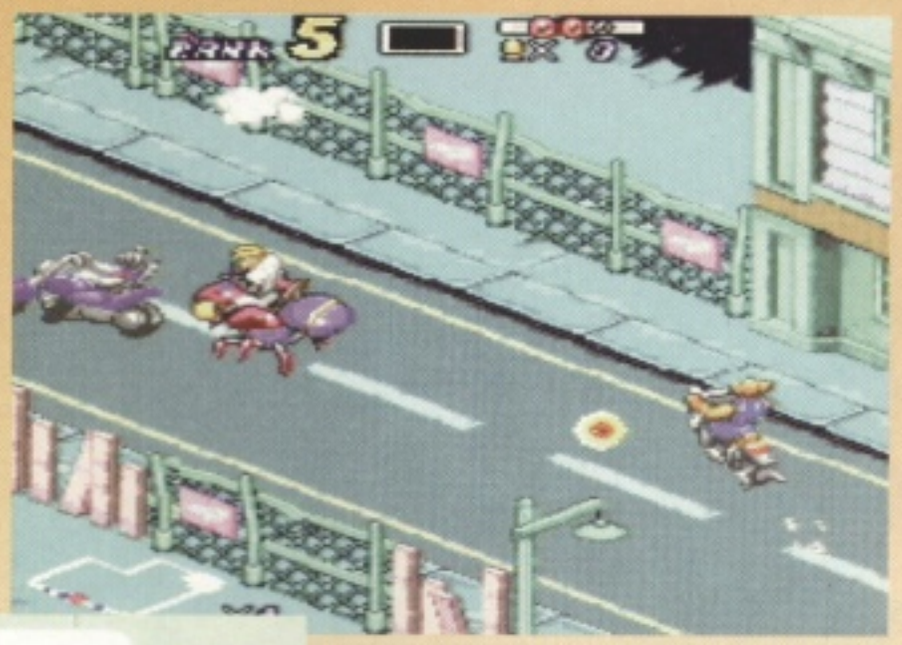
The mouse mechanic. It's true.
Looks a bit like – Henry Rollins.
Favourite cheese – Wensleydale.
Special attack – 'Grease Gun' (slaps enemies with a length of lard).
Winning phrase – "(Intake of breath)... Dear oh dear. That'll be yer valves, guv."

NAME: KARBUNKLE
MAX SPEED: 360 KPH
ATTACK: MUTATION BEAM
SPECIAL ABILITY: BIONIC ANCHOR

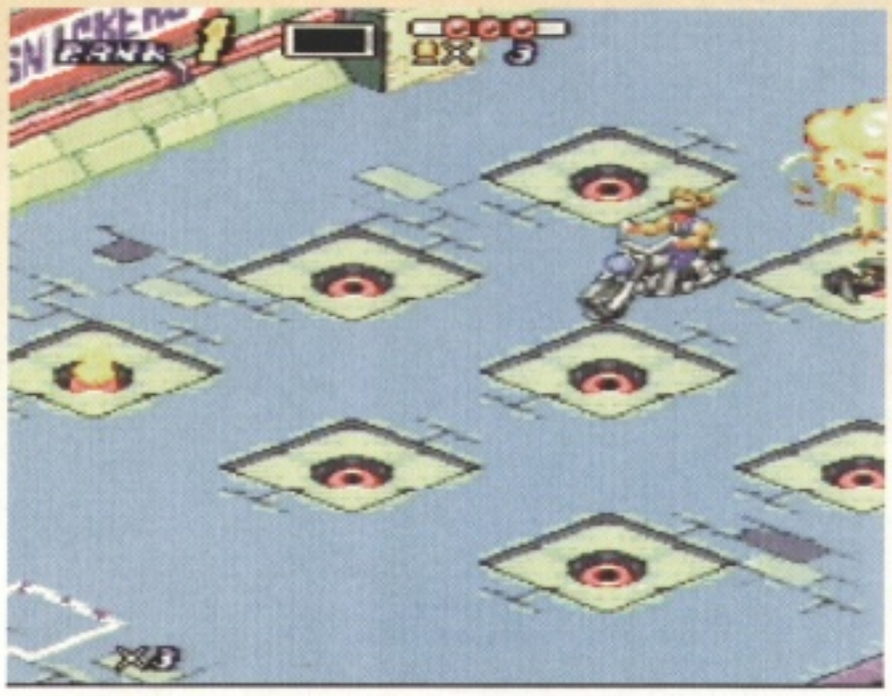
DOCTOR KARBUNKLE

Mad scientist. Laughs a lot. Mad people do, you see.
Looks a bit like – Honey Monster (from off of Sugar Puffs).
Favourite cheese – The one that "kids'll do anything for..."
Special attack – 'Mutation Beam' (turns enemies into Fred The Mutant – a chimpish oik who, understandably, gets run over a lot).

Mice Fact. Mice spread disease.
Rice (which sounds a bit like 'mice) Fact. Rice is quite good with 'curry'.
Biker Mice From Mars Fact. Out of *The Simpsons* and *Biker Mice From Mars*, *Biker Mice From Mars* is not best.



Serious Caption Fact. This is a Serious Caption. Here, we see your character shooting a fuzzy bullet at the other bikers.



Trundle over great, fiery holes in the ground. Shave your fuzzy head in shame. Never say 'extravaganza'.

Snickers used to be called Marathon, you know. Bleedin' Americans. National Lottery, Talk Radio et-blah blah-cetera...
SNICKERS

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

"Hello. God here. After a rough day confounding determined believers with unexpected failure and misery, there's nothing I like better than to kick off my, like, white sandals with wings on them or something, and, to the despairing accompaniment of the messages on my Prayer Answering Machine, settle back with a tasty, chunky SNICKERS BAR!"

Yep. The Biker Mice may well be from – hey! – MARS (oops!), but they eat SNICKERS. As, it would seem, does GOD himself. Twix? Kit Kat? Caramel? Satan fodder, more like. SNICKERS! SNICKERS! (Sorry, but I've been strangely affected by SNICKERS! the shameless sponsorship carpet-bombing contained SNICKERS! in this Snickers...)

Now... y'see... the thing with *Rock 'n' Roll Racing* was – it was crap. Some slickness, a touch of adrenaline – but, generally, nine parts crap, one part vague amusement for the clinically demented. *Biker Mice From Mars*, although it's worryingly based on a reasonably faceless cartoon show, is what happened when *Rock 'n' Roll Racing* went to a particularly manic party, spent most of the time huddled in a corner with *Mario Kart* and, during a warped, loping trip to the bathroom, stumbled into *Street Racer*'s room and – well – nature took its course. Video game epiphany. SNICKERS!

Up to a point, it's textbook stuff. Choose a character, get – ahem – on your bike, and thrust your scruffy, rodental frame around an increasingly hazardous series of isometric, decidedly post-postmodern racing arenas. Be faster, more wily, and more aggressive than the rest of the trundling vermin and you earn yourself the cash to buy equipment add-ons, weapon power-ups and (pant, pant...) SNICKERS! (for added energy, of course).

But, it all slots together in such an attractively slick and genuinely DIY fashion, it'll soon have you disappearing down the back of the sofa, forgetting to breathe and... quite... fancying... a... SNICKERS! Well, okay. Nothing's that good. But it is mercifully light on the niggly, tiresome, attempted strategy bits (you simply power up your engine and your tyres – no messing around with adding stupid, spiky, futuristic metal bits onto the bonnet or knobbing about with the choice of 'music' on the 'stereo') and slap-it-all-ovah-heavy on zippy, immediately satisfying playability and clattering, adrenaline-fizzing obnoxiousness. It also feels like they've included one of them there *NBA Jam*-like 'computer assistance' concepts – neither you or the computer-controlled racers ever seem to be able to zip so far in front as to make the whole thing uselessly unbalanced. Ace.

Pace! Variety! Amusing graphics! Two-player option! Too many exclamation marks! If you can blank out the woefully desperate-to-be-hip catch-phrases ("Let's rock!", "Wicked!", er, "Awesome" – probably), the shameless SNICKERS! plugging, and the (nit-pick approaching...) needlessly complicated password system (the 'passwords' are a tasty collection of unlikely geometrics which take TOO LONG TO WRITE DOWN! WHY? WHY?), then *Biker Mice From Mars* is decently distracting. It's no *Mario Kart*, but then what is? Apart from *Mario Kart*, of course. Thanks. I'll go away now...

● Andy Lowe

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
82%	80%	79%
GAMELIFE	**OVERALL SCORE:**	
65%		71%

VERDICT: An effective interpretation of a dubious licence, and, inevitably, much more fun in two-player than in solo mode. Loud, zippy, and stylish, but lacking substance, invention and longevity. And, out of *Rock 'n' Roll Racing* and this, this is definitely 'best'.

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SPIDERMAN

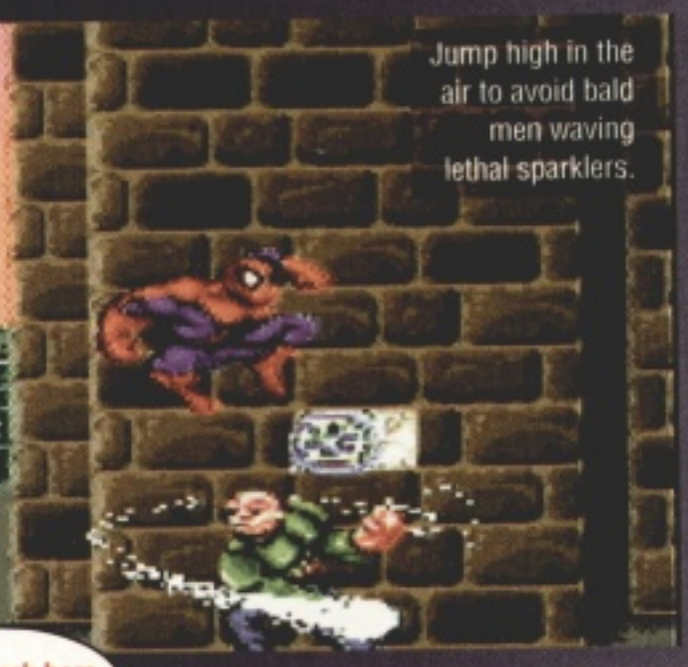
Get bitten by a radioactive spider, and one of two things happen. You either develop super-powers and the ability to climb, swing and fire webs, or you go to hospital for a long time. The odds are 50-50...

UK Release

Game: Spiderman
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Marvel Software
Price: £44.99
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

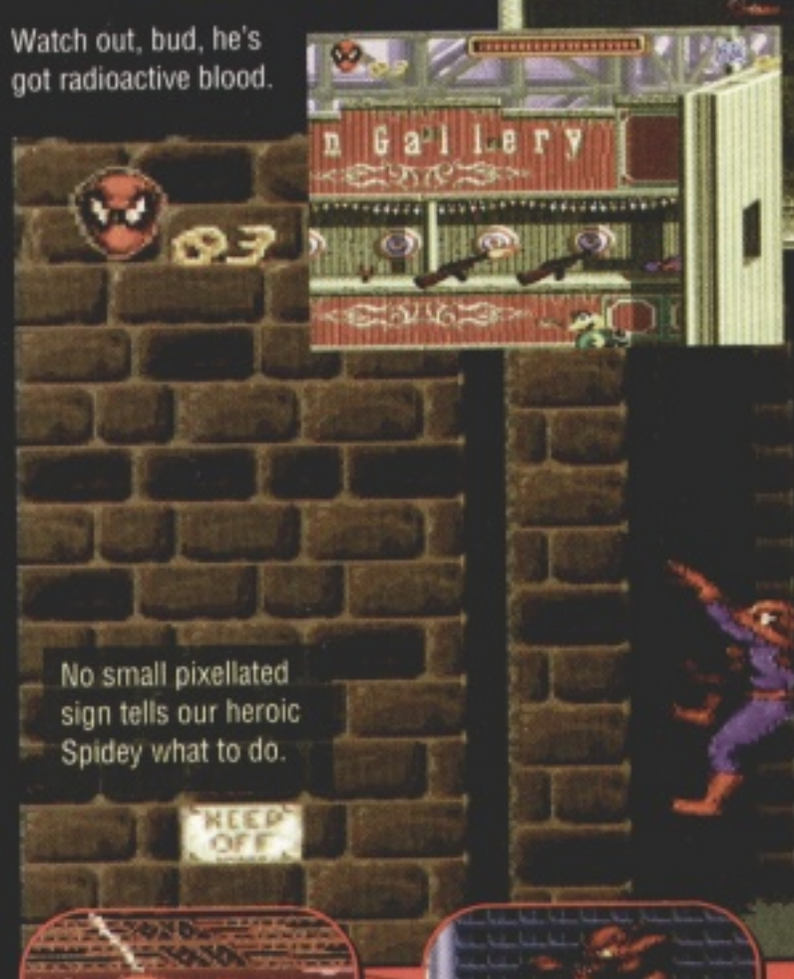
Red sky at night, Spidey's delight.

Some of the evil foe you have to catch, just like flies.



Jump high in the air to avoid bald men waving lethal sparklers.

Watch out, bud, he's got radioactive blood.



No small pixellated sign tells our heroic Spidey what to do.

Spidey ponders the validity of the judicial system.

Spidey does all the things a spider can. If we were him, we'd spend far more time skittering across floors and making women scream and jump onto rickety stools.

FLUSH HIM DOWN THE PLUGHOLE!

Actually, spiders generally don't kick. But we'll forgive Peter Parker just this once.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

There's been a mass break-out at Ravencroft, the secure hospital for the criminally insane. All the escapers are dangerous, and they've only got one thought in mind – they want to get Spidey (presumably because he was instrumental in getting most of them there in the first place).

And yes. There are six platform-filled levels of this foe-kicking for your delectation. It's the same formula you've seen a trillion times before – you move along, punch, kick or blast some dim, easy-to-kill baddies before moving further, climbing and web-swinging (ooh, a new feature) to the rest of the level. Hurt some more folk and just keep on going, picking up the Spidey faces for extra weaponry and health.

The main sprite is nicely drawn, but suffers from being so sluggish that you'd think a radioactive snail did the biting all those years ago. He can run, if you press down the right buttons, but even so, his feet seem covered in glue.

In the air, though, he comes alive, and swinging from the webs is one of the more fun features. It's a pity that the ground stuff gets so tedious, because the backdrops are worth seeing and the bosses are also just about worth the long slog. In fact, there are loads of bosses in *Spiderman*. They're not all end of level (seeing as there are only six levels), but seeing them is nice. Each one has his own attack, and although many are pretty tough to beat, they add a lot to the game. Owl, Doctor Octopus, Beetle, Lizard, Rhino and Scorpion all appear, and you'd be forgiven for expecting David Attenborough to pop up, armed with a powerful powder-blue mobile safari suit.

So what we have is a standard platform game with a slow main character, plenty to explore, some nifty Marvel baddies and lots of swinging, crawling, running, jumping, shooting, crouching and swearing (which you'll provide yourself). It's not bad, but it's not *Super Metroid* either.

● James Leach

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
76%	72%	73%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
78%		77%

VERDICT: Lots of bosses, some flexible gameplay and nice backgrounds just about make up for slow characters, and rather linear levels.

ROBOTREK

American Release

Game: Robotrek
Publisher: Enix
Developer: Quintet
Price: £54.95
Release: On import
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit
Thanks to Dream Machines (0429 869459) for the cart.

"Father come you said would he. Here help us to you are?" Another Japanese RPG, anyone?

The Big Book of Inventions is almost as big as you.

Always ring the doorbell before entering a house. You could get in trouble. Let's go exploring later!
Will this RPG alter the way you lead your life?

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Yeah, I know, the screenshots say it all. It's a standard overhead role-playing game. Busting to the cutesy-inflicted gills with cartoony characters, bizarre monsters and enough strange dialogue to fill 100 episodes of *Marine Boy*.

I would explain the plot, but it would be an obvious waste of a couple of paragraphs. Things invade, people die and the only one who can save an entire race of people is... a small boy. Hmm.

Okay, so *Robotrek*'s saving grace isn't its outstanding plot, originality, execution or graphics – so, what is it? Why didn't I score this game in the mid-40s and advise you to avoid it like a leper on heat? Well, it doesn't claim to be the best thing since Persil Colour, it doesn't boldly state that'll it'll change the way you look at life, it just knows it's an average RPG. The sort of game you'll love if you've completed *Zelda* more times than you've seen sunlight.

Although the cartoony graphics give the impression of simplicity, there's quite a depth to the game. Objects can be invented as you go along with the help of the 'Inventor's Friend' books that are scattered throughout the levels. Robots can be added to your team and these must be maintained – yes, I know, much like feeding a team, sleeping etc., but hey, at least they're trying to be different.

The level of difficulty is unremarkable. The sound's the usual sort of thing. I'm making sure here that I don't emit anything of such sparkling originality that the whole review could be thrown into jeopardy. Nope, impossible.

The story remains the same, however many times it's told. Quite simply, it WILL only appeal to fans, they WILL like it and it's no better or worse than 10 or so other games I could mention.

● Dean Mortlock

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
74%	65%	68%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	72%
74%		

VERDICT: Look at the pictures, everything can be gleened from them. Certainly, while *Robotrek* doesn't do anything original, what it does, it does fairly well.

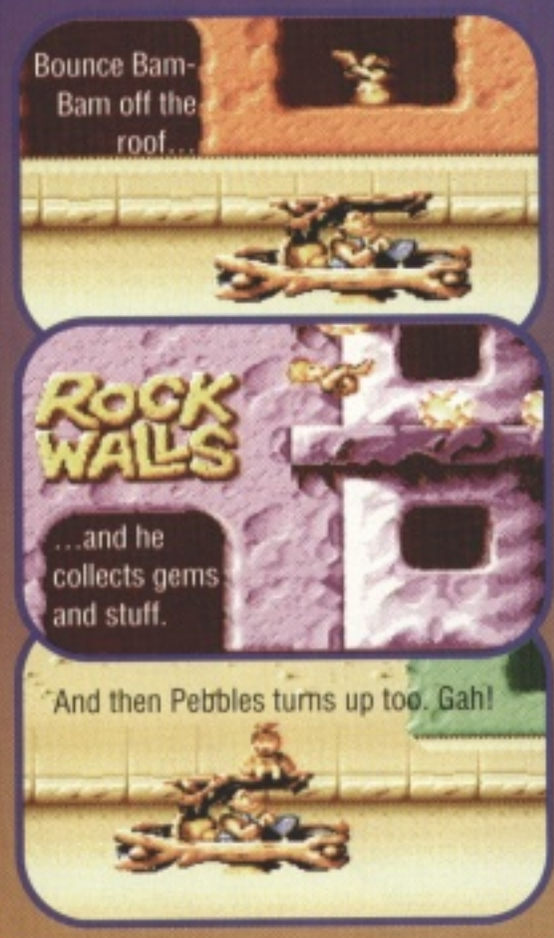
THE FLINTSTONES

Yabba, dabba doo or yabba, dabba duff?

A Stone Age boar and Fred. Hey, just call me Captien King.
If Fred has Stone Age versions of everything else, why doesn't he just get a big rifle?
If Fred's not bowling balls he's luzzing rocks, the Stone Age cad.
And there was me thinking that brontos were herbivores...
If you had a hat like that you'd have to laugh, too.
WELCOME TO BEDROCK
FIRST WITH FIRE

BOUNCING BABIES

The main platform action is dull, but the section involving Fred driving his car is weird. You must position the car underneath falling children who then bounce up to collect tokens for bonus points. Miss a child and it smacks into the road. It's hard to control, stupidly difficult and a bit twisted, if you ask me.



Fred meets his head in one of the game's more macabre moments.

UK Release

Game: The Flintstones
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: In-house
Price: £40
Release: On sale now
Players: One
Cart ROM: 16 Mbit

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

There was a time that when asked what my favourite type of game was I would chirpily reply 'platform games'. This was during the genre's second coming, with the likes of the original *Super Mario Brothers* and Sega's *Wonderboy* series holding the flag and pushing the cause. And yet now, perhaps eight years and ten landfill sites' worth of shoddy examples later, I'd say that I'd rather munch on a pile of James' soiled socks than willingly snuggle down with a platformer for company.

But here I am, playing *The Flintstones*. And not enjoying it much at all.

Let's begin at the beginning, whereupon Fred punches the air and yells a half-hearted 'Yabba Dabba Doo!' during the game's intro. The likeness of Hollywood's premier lardster John Goodman is there (albeit in that slightly scary deformed, digitised-not-quite-correctly kind of way), so we can offer up a ripple of applause for that.

The title screen includes a looped snatch from the BC-52s' (nudge, geddit?) 'hit' single that accompanied the film. I hate the B-52s with an absolute passion, but apart from the main track, the music isn't too bad at all. Some of the pieces are actually quite listenable, especially the credits screen track which features a wailing guitar solo almost on a par with *Rock 'n' Roll Racing*'s axework. So we can't really knock *The Flintstones* on the sound front.

The game proper is, of course, where we can deliver the knocking, and knock we should. First, though, the good bits: the fact that Fred can effect three different attacks (bowling ball, rock and club); the game offers a substantial challenge – surprising for a platformer these days; the...

Right. The bad bits, then: the fluffy collision detection; Fred's annoying inertia; the repetitive backdrops; the totally ridiculous lack of restart points; the way that getting through the game sometimes involves dying without warning in order to learn what to do next time around (after two or three minutes' play to get you back to that point); and finally, well, just the bloody humdrum nature of it all.

Praise the Lord that Christmas isn't just around the corner: this is exactly the sort of game you'd receive from a relative with good intentions but absolutely no knowledge of video games whatsoever.

● Tony Mott

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
68%	80%	57%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	59%
79%		

VERDICT: Not a bad game per se, just an average one – something that the SNES has quite enough of already, thank you very much.

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SNES TECH & GAMING ANSWERS

GAMEFREAK

Gamefreak – the man who knows more about the SNES than the French know about garlic.

From Paul Birkett, Scunthorpe:
Dear Gamefreak
Q In issue 29 you reviewed a great looking game called *The Firemen*. I thought it looked like my type of game but then I saw that it was a Japanese release. Any chance of a UK version?
A Every chance. Marubeni have tons of Japanese games for release here and *The Firemen* is one of them. It'll be out in June.

Flaming hot action.

From Joseph Schulz, Norwich:
Dear Gamefreak
Q Do Nintendo have any plans to release *Killer Instinct* on the SNES? (If they don't I'll be upset.)
A Well, the SNES could handle the fighters in theory, but the backgrounds would have to lose their incredible sense of depth, and the video sequences would go out of the window due to lack of cart space. Oh, and the spinning intro bits would go, too. So just about everything that made it such a stunner in coin-op form would have to go, leaving Just Another Fighting Game, albeit with beautiful sprites. I don't reckon Nintendo or Rare would go for that.

Sadly, Riptor is unlikely to ever grace your SNES.

From Greg Oxbrow, Welling, Kent:
Dear Gamefreak
Q What is the best out of *Sim City* and *Sim City 2000*?
A *Sim City 2000*: it's a much more involving game.
Q Is it a good idea to sell my SNES when the Saturn and PlayStation are officially released?
A You'll be seeing games on the SNES that are better *games* than most next generation stuff for some time yet. If you want to miss out on them, by all means sell it.
Q What's the best racing management game?
A Motor racing – I don't believe there are any; horse racing – forget it, the only ones available are in Japanese form with reams of indecipherable text.
Q Is *ESPN Speed World* any cop?
A It's a pile of old pants is what it is.

From Angus Auden, London:
Dear Gamefreak
Q I heard from some of my friends who own a SNES that the CD-ROM drive has been cancelled! Is this true?
A More like 'put on hold indefinitely', I'd say. The original unit design, as you probably know, was completely finished and apparently there's at least one finished title sitting in some exec's office somewhere (an amazing 3D shoot-'em-up, I gather). Solid facts are hard to come by beyond that. The thing is nobody will know for sure until Nintendo lets on officially.

From Spiney and Patrick Crane, Bournemouth:
Dear Gamefreak
Q Do you think *Secret Of Mana 2* might end up far too Americanised?
A No chance. It's being developed in Japan right now and will retain the quirky nature of the original. Americanisation will only creep in at the translation stage, but it'll be bearable.
Q Is it likely that Square Soft will keep the multi-tap option? Or Flammie, even?
A Yep, it will retain the multiplayer option, and can you imagine *Mana* without Flammie? It'd be like cream cheese without chives and, erm, Peters without Lee. (God, I'm getting old.)
Q Finally, on a scale of one to ten, what is the chance of any of the Mystical Ninja sequels appearing officially in the UK?
A Between a half and one.

From Garh Poon, Hornchurch, Essex:
Dear Gamefreak
Q When you get a game in for review do you get to keep the cart from the suppliers free?
A Often we review games from the publisher's production copy – which arrives as a naked board, without plastic casing – and they all get sent back. When the game finally hits the shops in boxed format we sometimes get sent a copy, but it's depressingly rare.

From Aelred Stevinson, Andover, Hants:
Dear Gamefreak
Q Will there be a sequel to *Donkey Kong Country*?
A Yes, along with various other ACM (advanced computer modelling – the technique used for *DKC*'s graphics) titles, Rare is working on a sequel.

From Alexander Prestwood, Cleethorpes, S. Humberside:
Dear Gamefreak
Q In what order, oh great one, should I get these games: *International Superstar Soccer*, *Cannon Fodder*, *Earthworm Jim*, *Super Return of the Jedi*?

Secret of Mana: Japanesey and we like it that way.

A The order you've given sounds pretty fair, although some will still argue that *EWJ* is the best thing ever.
Q Is there any chance of there being a *Lethal Enforcers II* conversion?
A No. Look out for *Tinstar* instead, it's more cartoony but at least it's vaguely similar.
Q What's your opinion on the Virtual Boy? To me it looks like something you can get fined for if your dog does one on the pavement.
A I think it'll do quite well in Japan because it has a high novelty factor. In the West, however, Nintendo are going to have their work cut out convincing consumers to buy it with the Ultra 64 appearing at roughly the same time. There *are* some better games appearing, though, and with support from Square, for example, it could surprise us all yet.

From Robert Warbeck, Richmond, Surrey:
Dear Gamefreak

DAYDREAMING

Another bumper batch of brain-straining wishes and desires rolled in this month, and some of them really pressed my buttons, so to speak. **Alexander Prestwood from Cleethorpes** is first up:

'My perfect game would be an isometric RPG strategy game set in downtown Moss Side in Manchester. You're the leader of a pack of AWOL soldiers, trying to rebel, through guerilla warfare, against the powerful forces of an insane, dictator-like megalomaniac. It would be a half-strategy/half-action adventure with a really pumping rock sound track.'

The isometric 3D arcade adventure is a worringly underused theme, I agree. But I don't think the residents of Moss Side would be very pleased with your choice of war zone. **Paul Evans of Greater Manchester** is next on the list:

'My gaming fantasy would be a cross between *Wolfenstein* and *Bloodwyche*. Whereas in *Wolfenstein* you just ran around blapping the bad guys, the game would include adventure elements to make it a kind of 3D *Secret Of Mana*. Id Software have already proved that they can make the environment work on the SNES and I know that they'd be willing to license the display engine technology to someone more experienced with RPGs (they licensed their PC *Doom* engine to Raven and they're doing *Heretic* using it). What say you?'

What about crossing *Wolfenstein* with *Bloodwyche*?

I say not bad, although having *Secret Of Mana* in mind as a yardstick is probably a bad thing. One if its strengths is that it takes the players through all manner of environments: a 3D engine of this type on the SNES could, by nature, only handle dungeon-type settings. **Craig Meggins of Co. Durham** is responsible for the next effort:

'How about an update of the old Speccy hit *Shockway Rider* by FTL? Except that whereas that featured only three lanes of traffic the SNES could have many, and manipulate the lot using Mode 7. It could be a great deal faster than the Speccy version and include many different types of weaponry to blow away the other riders with. There don't seem to be many new ideas coming to the SNES any more and I think that if things don't change we're going to be stuck with crappy platformers forever.'

Original software is indeed the only way that the SNES is going to stay alive and kicking, I agree. But did you *really* enjoy *Shockway Rider* that much? If we're talking Speccy updates I'd much rather see a version of Durrell's *Scuba Dive*, now that was original. Next up, **Dom West from Somewheresville**:

'Following your news story on Nitsubushi's Arcade Classic cart last month, I'd like to see Nintendo produce a compilation cart of all their old stuff. It could feature all the *Donkey Kong* games, *Popeye*, the original *Punch Out!* and loads more besides. Obviously they'd all be arcade perfect and they could squeeze about ten onto one cart. All their old stuff will be forgotten soon, and some of it still plays well today.'

I like this very much. And the great thing is, it's very much a possibility – has anyone seen Game Boy Gallery? It's a collection of five old Game and Watch titles and, okay, so it may well be crap but it shows that Nintendo still have an adventurous streak in them. There'd be a spanking prize winging its way to you if you'd given your address... **James Turner from Southampton** is next up with a wish:

'I want to see a trading game come out on the Super NES. Not a boring stockmarket sim or anything like that, but something where you could start out as a small business and build up to be a huge mega corporation. You could choose the type of goods you wanted to trade in and then move in and compete with different operations from different countries. I played an old public domain trading game called Lemonade Shop and I got thinking about how easily it would be to expand the idea using top graphics and more options.'

Oh dear, are you sure that you didn't pick up *Super Play* by mistake, instead of your usual copy of PC Bore? Sorry, but the only trading game I've ever played that was any good was *Minder*, and that was top fun. Regular contributor **Larry Loxbury from Somerset** is next:

'My daydream would be a viewed-from-above road combat racing game, perhaps a conversion of Sega's old *Spy Hunter* game. It would have more levels, including really busy city sections and perhaps use Mode 7 to incorporate different routes. Whereas in *Spy Hunter* you only had the choice of either car or powerboat, this would also include offroad motorcycling bits *and* a helicopter section. What do you reckon?'

I reckon you know a good game when you see it, Lar. *Spy Hunter* surely ruled in its day and properly updated, with a Tim Follin remix of the Duane Eddy soundtrack, it would rule again on the SNES.

Let's let **Geoff Bun of Clwyd** have the last word this month:

'My only dream is that Nintendo produces a SNES adaptor for the Ultra 64 – like the SNES's Super Game Boy – so that I don't have to sell my collection of games that I've built up over the last three years. That's fair, isn't it?'

Q If the Virtual Boy is a flop do you think Nintendo will bump up the price of the Ultra 64 to make up for their losses?
A Absolutely not. As usual, Nintendo will be the last to enter the fray with the Ultra 64 so it's really important that it doesn't price itself out of the market. The competition will already have a foothold through time on sale alone and Ninty simply has to get everything right to stand a chance of becoming the market leader.
Q Any chance of *Darkstalkers* appearing on the Super NES?
A Capcom, among many other major developers, is putting a great deal of effort into producing software on the Saturn and PlayStation (a version of *Darkstalkers* is hitting the PS, and *X-Men* is appearing on the Saturn) so its lead teams are tied up with other projects at the moment. Don't write it off, though.

From Hassan Balli, London:
Dear Gamefreak
Q Nintendo say that they are going to sell the Ultra 64 for $200 – I think they're just saying that to stir up enough hype so people won't spend their money on all the other new consoles. If they give us the impression that the Ultra 64 will be superior to other consoles in many ways and for less than half the price, people will wait until the Ultra 64 is available before they spend their money – only to find out that it costs more. What do you think?
A Okay. Silicon Graphics are claiming that the Ultra 64 will be capable of reproducing the quality seen in demos created using their own Onyx hardware. Hardware that costs tens of thousands of dollars. I think I can let you draw your own conclusions from there regarding that $200 price point.
Q Will any action RPGs of the same nature as *Zelda* and *Secret Of Mana* appear on the Ultra 64?
A Of course. Regardless of the 3D graphical capabilities of all the next generation machines, traditional overhead-viewed RPGs are, and will continue to, appear on them because the game format is so solidly established. Square are very close to Nintendo and they can be counted on for some dead chipper RPGs on the Ultra 64.

From Andrew Kitchener, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk:
Dear Gamefreak
Q In your opinion will the Ultra 64 be a reality, or will it be shelved like the SNES CD unit which I was looking forward to?
A Hey, we're talking about a machine codenamed Project *Reality* – Nintendo have put so much into the project that to turn back now would be disastrous. The machine will appear, but will doubtless contradict much of what is expected from it at the moment.
Q In issue 15 your news section featured a new 3D control system by Triax. What happened to it?
A I remember it too, and I also remember thinking at the time: 'Nope, it's not going to come to anything'. With no software produced to support its 'unique' features it quietly died away.

From Tom Kershaw, Seaford, Sussex:
Dear Gamefreak
Q Do you know if the Ultra 64 will have joypads or Neo Geo-style sticks? I reckon that *Killer Instinct* may lose that killer combo feeling with a joypad.
A The machine will use pads as standard. Incidentally, even SNK have recently submitted to the popularity of pads and released their own for the Neo Geo.
Q Where do you think computer games technology will go text – maybe 128-bit, then 256-bit consoles? It's getting out of hand but it's good fun.
A It's going to be a long, long time before 64-bit technology is superseded in console technology. The main push will be towards developing custom chips and not in just increasing the number of bits in a system.

ANY QUESTIONS?

No requests for game help and no anime questions, please. But send everything else to:
Gamefreak, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

MODE 7

By Allan Brett

CALLING ALL CHEATS, CRACKERS, AND GAME-FREAKS!

WARNING: The material contained in this document can seriously increase the lastability of your Super NES Game Pak. We need your tips and we need them all, no matter how silly or small, for the most comprehensive tip catalogue in the world. I've noticed a few fake tips rolling in too – for example, Abbey Manjothi from Wakefield reckons he has found a Sonya morph with Shang Tsung on MK2. I had my doubts from when I read: 'Win 30 fights using Shang Tsung and then press DOWN+BLOCK+A+B when Johnny Cage performs his red shadow kick and you will morph into Sonya for about 10 seconds.' Yeah, great! Don't bother trying to pull the wool over my eyes. You are now 25p poorer and your letter is in my bin too.

Stealthily approaching a quiet Dorset caravan site, the Battle Suit switched to infinite rockets.
I never knew space was so... so... so... dull.

VORTEX

(Sony/Argonaut)

***SP26:* 90%**

- 3D previews
- Infinite lives
- Infinite ammo
- Invincibility
- Super level codes

In keeping with this issue's Metal Gear theme of mobile suits in action, Mode 7 is proud to present a wealth of tips for a game which puts you in control of none other than a gigantic transforming assault suit. This may not be up to the standard of game developer Argonaut's collaborations with Nintendo, but if you've purchased this on the basis of its Super FX lineage then you're quite possibly having trouble with its dangerously fraught levels. Time for Mode 7 to step in and point your walker in the right direction, eh? To start off, we have a full selection of level codes for the game.

Vortex 1:	VBBBB
Cryston:	YFGJW
Voltair:	RWXVP
Thermis:	DHLNC
Magmemo:	BGVRG
Vortex 2:	JNBTK
Trantor:	XLQMB

Just enter these on the password screen to jump straight to where you wish to commence.

The next three codes will help you explore the levels from the start, and should be entered on the password screen like the level codes above. The first was provided by Dave Kendall of Peckham:

JTTSJ: Infinite Lives
WSVTQ: Infinite Ammo
HVZSM: Invincibility (infinite shield energy and fuel)

Every so often a picture comes along that you just don't want to explain.

ASK ALLAN

INVALUABLE MONTHLY GAMING ADVICE

This is the section where people are sometimes afraid to send in questions in case they look a bit silly, or because everyone thinks they're either crap gameplayers or just plain stupid. On the other hand, if I can't answer their queries I end up looking even more foolish. So, I hope you all realise that my reputation as one of the best pad-wagglers around is being put on the line for you lot.

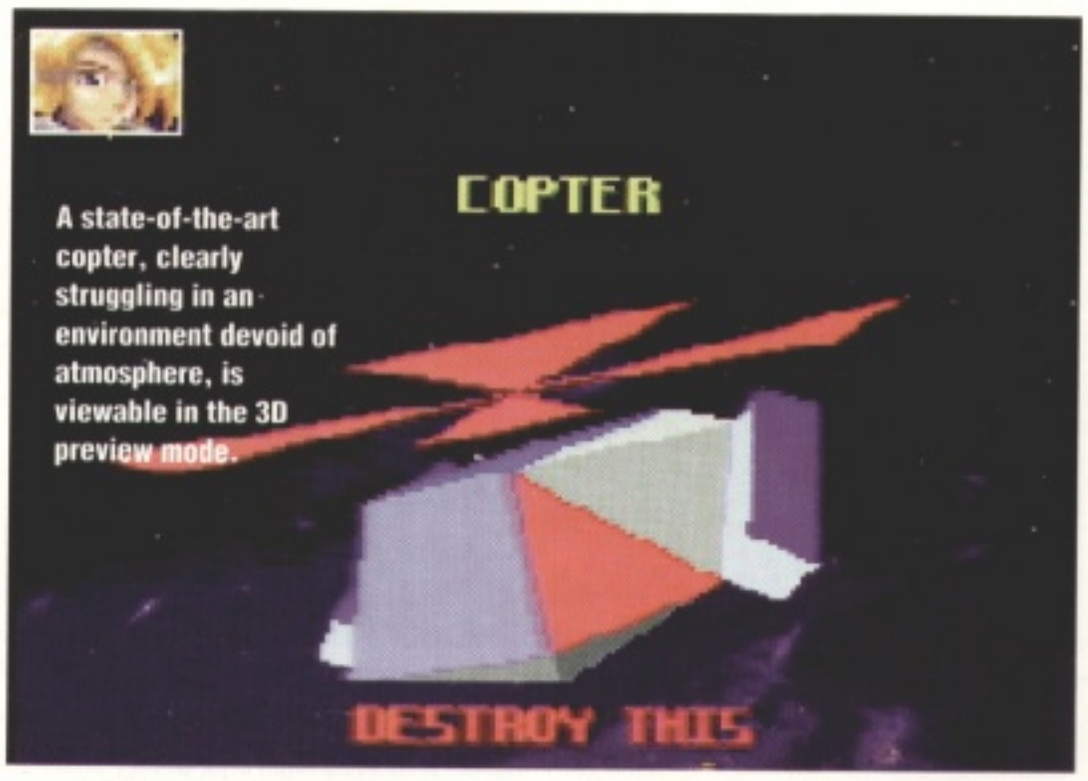
DEAR ALLAN:
Is there a hidden fighter in *Super SF2*, and if so, how do you get to him?
Nathan Deneal, Sheffield
ALLAN SAYS:
The only way you will get a hidden fighter is if you get a mate to play sitting behind the sofa. Seriously, there isn't a secret character. It seems that Capcom could not spare the memory to include Akuma in the conversion, and anything you hear differently is utter garbage. Since it's been several months since the game was released in the US, and Capcom has not officially announced the long-awaited speed cheat, I think we can safely rule that out too. I don't know what they're playing at, I really don't.

DEAR ALLAN:
On *Starwing* I can see a Black Hole on the map screen but I don't know how to reach it, could you tell me how it's done please?
Matthew Harsent, Lowestoft, Suffolk
ALLAN SAYS:
An old but popular query, especially since *Starwing*'s budget re-release. To reach the black hole you must get to the Asteroid Belt on level 1. On this level, just after the half-way mark, you will see lines of five asteroids spinning towards you. If you shoot the middle one at the very last moment, flying through the smoke and debris each time, an asteroid with a face on it will appear. Fly into it to get to the Black Hole.

DEAR ALLAN:
You think you're a gaming legend... Blah, blah, blah... I'm a *Secret of Mana* expert... Blah, blah, blah... Sometimes when I cast Lunar magic, a Glyph comes up and says WORLD'S BIGGER. Is there more to the Land of Mana or not?
Reagan Campbell, NSW, Australia
ALLAN SAYS:
Well, Mr So-called expert, there isn't more to the Land of Mana. WORLD'S BIGGER comes up when you use the weird-out Lunar magic spell with random effects, one of which reduces your entire party to pygmy size.

If several spells are flying at once or you're up to a very high level then the spell may not work against you, although you'll still see the message appear.

DEAR ALLAN:
What magic should I use to kill the Mana Beast?
Edwardo, Justin and Mark, Very stuck



A state-of-the-art copter, clearly struggling in an environment devoid of atmosphere, is viewable in the 3D preview mode.

What's more, Argonaut themselves have been gracious enough to provide us with their *piece de resistance* – the *Vortex* Super Code:

CTGXF: Level Switch Activated

• Its first function is as a level select, allowing the player to choose any mission from the briefing screen by pressing up or down, as in the training levels.

• Secondly, by using a controller in the player two joypad port, you can activate the following functions at any time with a press of the appropriate button:

Y – Initiate self-destruct of the Morphing Battle System and lose a life.

A – Skip to end of level (use this to see the end sequence)

R – Turn on infinite lives, infinite ammo and invincibility.

• The third, and most impressive, function of Argonaut's super code is that it engages a 3D shape preview mode in the game's intro sequence. Having entered the password, wait until the Bonus Container shape appears on the screen (just after the briefing on the Morphing Battle System). Using the joypad, you'll discover you can examine most of the game's three-dimensional objects (except the bosses, unfortunately) and manipulate them with the following buttons.

D-Pad, A, Y – three planes of rotation

X & B – cycle forwards and backwards through the items respectively

L – zoom in

R – zoom out

To my mind it's highly reminiscent of the continue screen in *Starfox*, where you could twiddle with the Arwing in those idle moments of posthumous reflection, but without the psychedelic video feedback.

Scuffing the ground with your wingtips no longer smarts, thanks to our Invincibility code.

Use infinite fuel to take the Jet anywhere. Including this drive-in.

Destroy this, too, eh? I think I spot a common theme emerging.

You can even blast away the credits with your Jet Morph. Nice touch.

Guess what? You destroy this. Oh, the relentless misery of wanton destruction.

ALLAN SAYS:

Use the Girl's and Sprite's Mana magic on the hero's sword to turn it into the Mana sword temporarily, then use the hero to wack the Mana Beast when it comes close.

Make sure you keep reviving the sword when the magic eventually wears off (note that if you build up your Mana magic beforehand, the effect will last for a while longer).

DEAR ALLAN:

How do you get the Kombat tomb fatalities to work on *MK2*?

Anthony Wong, Pinner, Middlesex

ALLAN SAYS:

All of the characters have different button combinations to get their pit fatalities to work. I think the easiest is Johnny Cage's; just press DOWN, DOWN, DOWN and High or Low Punch.

And if you're the sort who wants to see your victim slide off the spikes after being impaled then pull down and press START on both pads as soon as you pull off the fatality.

ONE FINAL WORD

Please don't send SAEs as I have enough work to do without replying to dozens of different people on a personal basis. Do yourself a favour and buy yourself a Twix or something with the stamp money. If you have a question that has so far baffled the world's best scientific minds don't send your posers to me, as I probably won't be able to help you either. *(only 'probably', Allan? How modest – Ed)* But if you have any other questions then give me a try.

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:

Ask Allan, *Super Play*,
Future Publishing,
30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon
BA1 2BW.

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER

(LucasArts/JVC)
SP30: 92%

- **Full energy for all players**
- **Superstar team**

This translation of the Japanese Perfect Eleven plays a top game of footie, and now we've got some top cheats courtesy of Konami's UK outfit. Both of these cheats should be used in the Open Game, not the Competition matches. You need to enter the following codes on the title screen with controller 2:

• UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, B, A gives your players full energy (with their little smiley faces on red).

• B, B, X, X, A, Y, A, Y, RIGHT, LEFT, X gives you a chance to indulge in some fantasy football management with a team composed entirely of Star Players with maximum abilities. Jon Sloan at Konami UK informs us that the Dream Team still requires some masterful handling to get anything out of it – probably something to do with all those delicate over-inflated egos coming into conflict. Superstars, eh? Tch. Still, with Valderamma and Baggio playing in the same shirts, you are at least guaranteed a Big Hair Team.

Top footy action with the superstar team.

CLAYFIGHTER 2

(Interplay)
SP28: 87%

- **Super Speed Battles**

It seems that no self respecting beat-'em-up is complete without its own extra speed tip and this one, no matter how silly, is no exception. If you are getting a bit bored with the sluggish pace of speed 4 and fancy a spot of turbo-charged speed 10, then pay attention. Enter the Tournament mode, pick speed 1, play your match, watch the second match and reset halfway through the third. You should now have speed 10 at your disposal. Thanks to Michael Smith from Sinfin, Derby, for his malleable mischief.

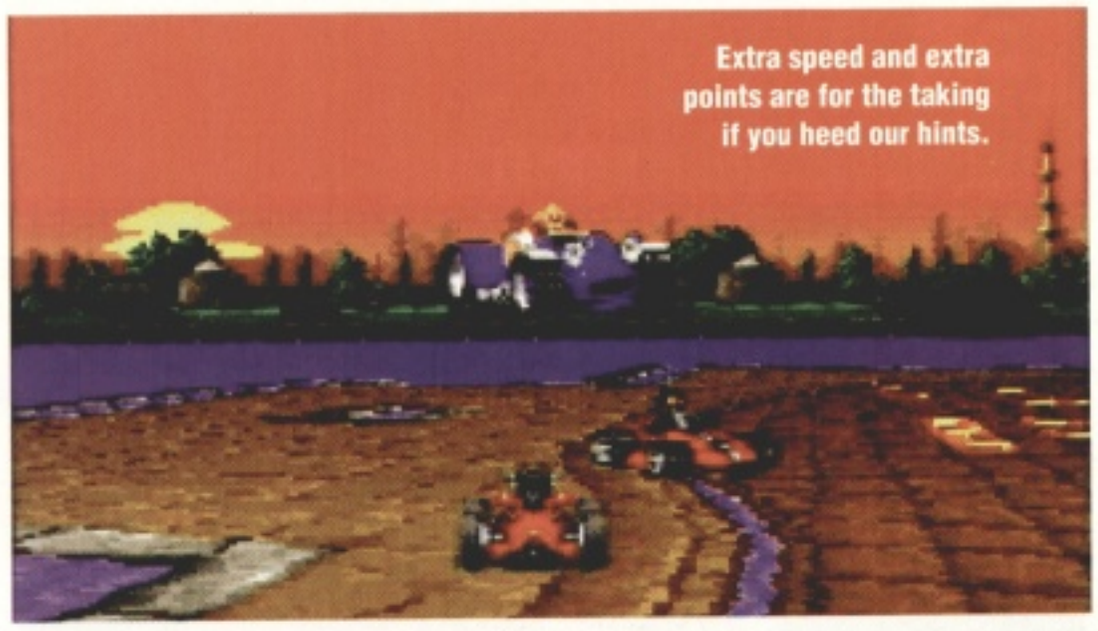
STREET RACER

(UBI-Soft)
SP25: 91%

- **Extra speed**
- **Extra points**

Are you a velocity head? Then listen to Steven Giles of Northampton. He suggests you try pressing X, Y, X, Y, X, Y, holding X and pushing right when choosing a character. In this way, says Steven, your top speed will increase.

Not to be outdone, Piran Broadbelt offers the following tipple. After you finish a race, choose the playback option: watch part of the race until you lose your first amount of energy, then exit playback (making sure you exit just before the energy is lost, according to Piran). Apparently, you'll be awarded with the '2 perfect race' bonus points as well as any others you may have collected. Maybe we didn't get it quite right but try yourself and see if it works for you.



Extra speed and extra points are for the taking if you heed our hints.

SPARKSTER

(Konami)
SP25: 89%

- **Crazy hard mode**

He's crazy, he's hard, he's a mod. He's a crazy hard mod. *(Crazy Hard MODE, you peasant – Ed).* Ah, I see. Ne'er mind. So what really happens to Sparkster, Konami's great little platformer based on the jet-powered opossum of the same name, when you enter this cheat? Why, it becomes much more of a challenge. It's fair to say that you'll be tearing your fur out before you overcome the later levels.

On the game's set-up screen, enter LEFT, LEFT, RIGHT, RIGHT, DOWN, UP, DOWN, UP, A, X and you'll enter a super difficulty mode that's normally only reached by clocking the game several times over. Thanks again to Jon Sloan for sharing that piping hot slice of cheat pie.

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

(Rare/Nintendo) SP27: 90%

- **Sound test**
- **Monkey business**

More *DKC* tips are flooding in but I'm afraid I've got my doubts about whether or not they work. The discrepancy may be *when* you're supposed to enter these codes: some should be entered when you see Kranky winding up his gramophone, whilst others should be used on the screen displaying battery back-up games. Try both and see if you have any luck. First up is a sound/music test for those toe-tapping tunes. Enter DOWN, A, R, B, Y, DOWN, A, Y (DARBY DAY), then use Select to cycle through each level.

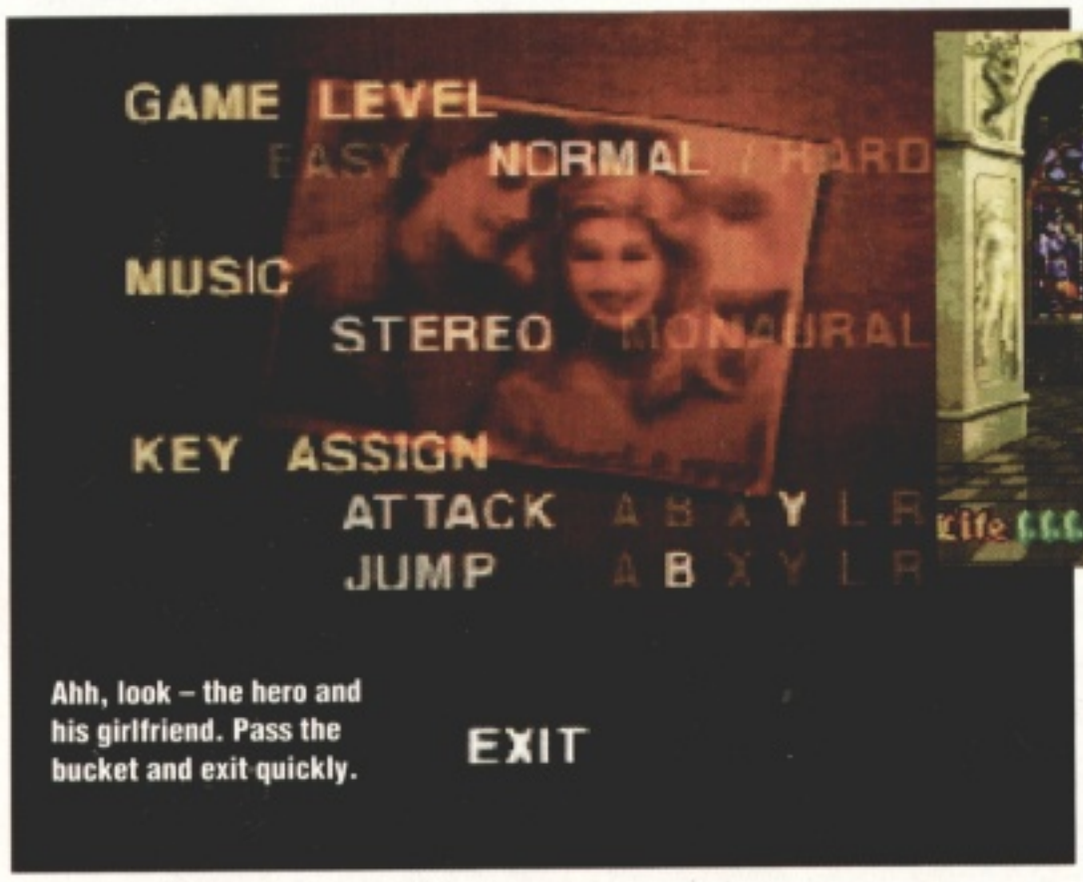
The other bit of nonsense gives you a BAD BUDDY. And you enter just that – B, A, DOWN, B, UP, DOWN, DOWN, Y – to get it to work. Sure enough, player two will be able to take over control from player one at any time.

LEMMINGS 2

(Psygnosis)
SP26: 88%

- **Sound test**
- **Level select**
- **Dot your 'i's**

Would you like a couple of fine tips for this great puzzler, courtesy of Patrick Salt from Lymington? You'd be foolish not to. On the title screen, place the cursor on the hole in the tree in the bottom left-hand corner and press B: you'll activate a sound test. Similarly, if you press B on all windows and doors on the title screen (including the one behind the 'B' in 'By') you will be able to select any level. And … if you press B with your cursor on the dot in the 'i' in the word 'Lemmings' you'll see words appear next to the Lemmings during the game – for example, 'Squelch' pops up whenever a Lemming dies.



Ahh, look – the hero and his girlfriend. Pass the bucket and exit quickly.

And now you can choose exactly where you want to start the game.

DRAGON BALL Z 3

(Bandai) *SP27:* 70%

- **Increase attack points**

David Pang of Kent tells us of a method of increasing your attack points which is much stronger than the cheat from William Wong that appeared a few issues ago. What you must do is press L, R, UP, DOWN, Y, X, LEFT, RIGHT when the characters are bragging before the bout. You have to be pretty nippy with the joypad, it must be said.

NOSFERATU

(Bandai) *SP27:* 70%

- **Level select**

Getting to meet the Count isn't easy, so here's a cheat from our Japanese correspondent which allows you to shortcut levels you've played to death. Go to the options screen (with its tacky picture) and press down on the joypad until you've highlighted the word EXIT. Without leaving the options screen, enter L, L, R, R, R, L, L, L and the word EXIT should flash. Wait and it'll fade to a black screen with the first stage named. Use the joypad to cycle through the stages until you find where you wish to start.

SUPER METROID

(Nintendo) *SP20:* 92%

- **That hyper gun code**

Apologies are due, I think. Not just egg on face for the *Super Play* team, but a whole cheese and mushroom omelette with a sprig of parsley. We proudly announced Andrew Teague's Hyper Gun code for the Action Replay back in issue 28, and then failed to notice that the code itself had completely vanished from the page. So here is that troublesome code, which gives Samus the all-powerful Hyper Beam from the start of the game.

7E0A 7780

Got that? It's still there? Good. And if you're interested in getting 100% of the items in record time, try out 7E09 A3C0 to start off with the grappling hook and X-Ray vision. Not that you need them if you're as good as me, naturally.

EARTHWORM JIM

(Virgin/Shiny) *SP29:* 91%

- **Scan the entire level**
- **Extra continue**
- **Get plasma cannon**
- **Extra worm**
- **Debug screen**

All of these cheats are activated by starting a game, pausing the action with START, entering the code and unpausing. Some of them (plasma cannon, 1-Up and extra continue) will only work once per level, so if you want those bonuses to accumulate then make sure you do the relevant cheats each time. You should hear a 'Yippee!' that confirms the cheat has worked.

• Enter A, X, A, X, A, A, A, A and Jim will disappear from the screen. By moving the D-pad you'll be able to scroll the screen around to view every section of the level, helping you to find those secret bonus areas and hidden power-ups. What's more, if you find an area you want to explore then just press A and Jim will suddenly reappear in the middle of the screen. Hey, it's the crazy flyaway go-anywhere cheat that lets you fulfill your potential as an augmented invertebrate.

• If you enter A, B, A, B, X, Y, X, Y you'll notch up an extra continue, as depicted by a can of worms on the continue screen.

• For that small but vital buzz of wayward pleasure that only a serious upgrade in firepower seems to provide, try entering A, A, B+L (simultaneously), A, A, X, B+L, X. The plasma shot will be yours for a brief period. Try it out on everything.

• An extra life can be picked up on each level with the combination B, B, A, X+Y, A, A, A, A.

• Richard Kirman of Brighton is one step ahead of the pack, as he's supplied a cheat for a debug screen. Again, pause the action and press left (on the D-pad) + A, B, X, A, A, B, X, A and you'll see the faces of the programming team (plus the game's hero) in black and white before it fades to a cheat screen where you can select invulnerability and your starting level.

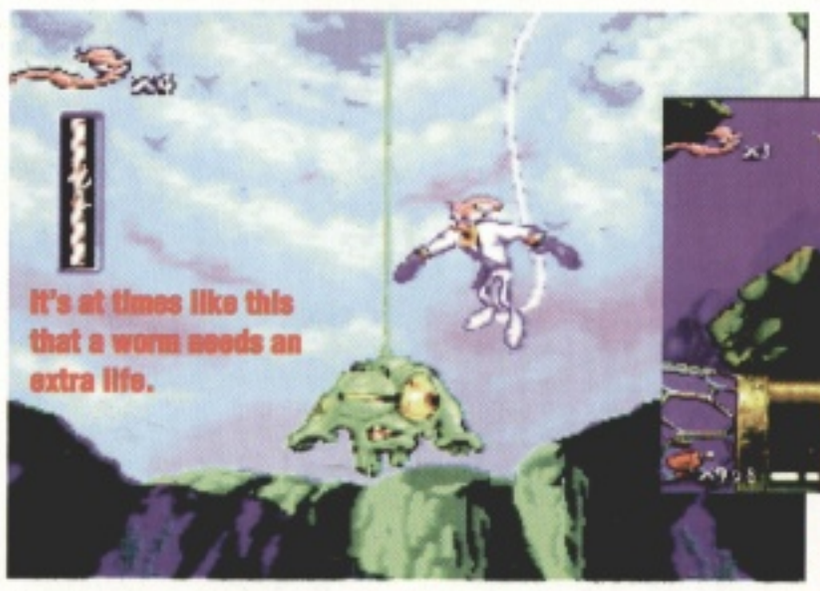
Finally, it might be an opportune moment to round up the previous codes we've discovered. Pressing Y, A, B, B, A, Y, A, B, B, A (yabba yabba?) whilst paused takes you to a picture of some silly faces and an in-joke about old cheat codes that means little to anyone outside of Shiny Ents. Whilst A, B, X, A, X+A, X+B, X+B, X+A will skip to the end of the level. Enough *EWJ* craziness there to last you a month, I reckon.

Time to disappear and find those hidden power-ups to beat the evil Hammy.

NTSC 60Hz SUPER NINTENDO
EARTHWORM JIM
29th. August 1994
(C)1994 SHINY ENTERTAINMENT, INC
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
TEL: USA 714 494 0772 -8 HOURS
RAM BANK1 FREE : 0814
RAM BANK2 FREE : 030E
ROM BYTES USED : EFEEAC
ROM BYTES FREE : F01154
MUSIC & SOUND Fx USES : 03C492
PROGRAM CODE BANK USES : 8066
ROOM FOR SPRITE ST. 658 : 2690
MAX TILES TO MAKE MAP : 0000
CHEAT MODE ON
START LEVEL 15-POD RACE
FREEZEABILITY ON
MAP VIEW MODE--OFF
PRESS THE 'START' BUTTON

The debug screen where you can choose your start level and select invulnerability.

Those Americans programmers are such a crayzeee bunch of guys.



It's at times like this that a worm needs an extra life.

Make Jim disappear and scan the level.

Arguably the most exciting bit of the game.

Wow. The supervisor's flying attack. More *ROTR* hilarity.

If you play as the Supervisor (UP, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT, B) then you can also perform the lamest fighting move ever. On player 2's pad, just jump straight up and press B. But Ryan Wilson of Birmingham admits to working out the Supervisor's 'moves': DOWN, TOWARDS, UP – nob flying attack. DOWN, BACK, UP – melt into the floor for no apparent advantage. *Rise of the Robots*? *Pitfighter '95*, more like.

RISE OF THE ROBOTS

(Acclaim/Mirage) *SP29:* 33%

- **Invincibility**
- **Skip to end sequence**

Oh good grief. 33% is far too generous, believe me. Quite how they had the audacity to release this is beyond understanding, but if you erroneously bought this cart and haven't swapped/sold/melted it yet then allow me to mumble a few small cheatlets that might give you one last chuckle at this effort.

For all of these codes you should flick past the titles to the screen where the cyborg is examining the menu offering one or two player bouts. Now enter DOWN, B, UP, B, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, B on controller 1 and your character is invulnerable to damage. Alternatively, use controller 2 to enter LEFT, B, RIGHT, B, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, B and you'll skip straight to a tiny window showing the remarkably unimpressive pre-rendered end sequence. Infinitely preferable to playing all the way through, methinks.

Why go through the pain of playing at all?

ACTION REPLAY CODES

We've had lots of codes for old games, and lots of easy-to-find codes for new ones (infinite lives and so on), so here's a proposition: we want more weird stuff. Can any of you AR boffins out there help us find more of those interesting offbeat codes, the ones that do odd things without interfering with the game?

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

80E9 BC60 Allows you to use the Action Replay

80E9 EE60 Allows you to play the PAL version on Japanese and US machines

7E05 7B99 Always have 99 bananas

7E0D 7909 Changes the colour of bananas to local bad dude

7E00 3203 Donkey Kong swims on all levels

7E05 1212 Ride on Donkey Kong's back, press A to fly

ADVENTURES OF BATMAN AND ROBIN

8288 E880 Allows you to play the UK version on US/Jap machines

7E008Exx Replace xx for level select

SUPER PUNCH OUT

7E08 9C1B Infinite Super Punch

STREET RACER

7E16 F101 Unlimited Turbos player 1

7E16 F301 Unlimited Turbos player 2

THE FINAL CURTAIN

Do you have a tip so hot that just writing it down burns holes in the paper? Then send it to me at the address below. But don't try to phone it in – the *Super Play* staff are vile tricksters, and will expensively redirect your call to Tel Aviv Air Traffic Control.

MODE 7, *SUPER PLAY*, FUTURE PUBLISHING, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH BA1 2BW

FREE ADS

Now's the time for a bit of spring cleaning. Dust off those shelves delve into your wardrobes. You never know what you might find – and you can sell it here!

SUPER MARKET

GAMES FOR SALE

● For sale: DK Cty £35, FIFA £30, Rock 'n' Roll Racing £20, Starwing £10 or swaps for NBA Jam, Super Mario Kart or Super R of Jedi. Tel: (01352) 710607

● 12 SNES games for sale. £200 the lot or will split them up. Tel: (01532) 717663

● Secret of Mana, Illusion of Gaia, Brain Lord, Shadow Run, Soul Blazer. Swap for Final Fantasy II or III, Mystical Quest, Breath of Fire, Spike McFang or sell £25 each. Tel: (01633) 262920

● Game Boy games for sale, all with box + instructions: Altered Space £7, Kirby £7, Jurassic Park £10, Mega Man II £10, Zelda £15. Tel: (0141) 6374531

● Final Fantasy II for sale or swap. Will sell for £20 or swap BOF, Illusion of Gaia or other good RPG or Action Replay II. Tel: (081) 539 5617

● Rainbow Bell Adventures (jap) £23, F-Zero (UK) £13. I will pay P&P. Please note Rainbow Bell Adventures needs NTSC only adaptor if running on UK SNES. Tel: (0268) 779309

● Super NES games for sale. FIFA (UK) £35, Madden 94 (US) £25, Rock 'n' Roll Racing (UK) £25, Axelay (US) £10 all with instructions. Tel: (01703) 615417

● UK SNES games for sale, Super Metroid £30, NBA Jam £25, Starwing £10. Also Game Boy for sale, 2 games – boxed with instructions £30. Tel: (0151) 2591295

● Super NES games for sale: Starwing (UK) £17 and SFII Turbo (UK) £25 and F-Zero (UK) no instructions £14. Legend of the Mystical Ninja (US) £17. Ask for Paul on: (01705) 571941

● Boxing Legends of Ring, NHL'94, Mystical Ninja (all US), Batman Returns, DK, Castlevania IV and Mario World all for £120. All boxed with instructions. Tel: (01455) 610400

● Game Boy games for sale or swap. Mario Allstars for DK Cty (SNES). Tel after 7pm on: (01532) 533485

●DK Cty for sale as new £45 NHL'94 Ice Hockey (US) £25 Contact Charles on: (01935) 822620

●SSFII (US) and adaptor £50, R-type III (UK) £30. Lemmings (UK) £15. Tel: (01334) 474840

●For sale – SNES game Shadow Run £15. Tel: (01203) 229882

●US SNES and Genesis for sale with at least 3 new games for around £125 dollars each. Call me on: (081) 4745318

●Xenon 2, Quack Shot, Zero-wing, Where in the World is CS, Forgotten Worlds + Risky Woods, £10 each. Ecco the Dolphin + Mortal Kombat, £30 each or £50 both. Also jap games for sale, eg. Bare Knuckles, £10 each. Tel: (01778) 346682

●SNES games: Demon's Crest (US) £35 Spike McFang (US) £30, Mechwarrior (UK) £15 Mega Drive games: Soleil (UK) £35, Bubba 'n' Stix (UK) £15, Mighty Max (UK) £20. P+P inc. Tel: (01379) 740367

●SNES + 8 games, Stunt Race FX, Rock 'n' Roll Racing, The Lost Vikings, Nigel Mansells World Championship, Mystical Wing A, Starwing, R Type III, Bomberman. Bargain £300 the lot. Tel: (01226) 382890

●For sale: Wolfenstein 3D with codes £35. SFII £10. Tel: (01753) 863919

●World Heroes (jap) £20, DK Cty (US) £32. Also PC engine games. Tel: (01443) 431995

●SNES Brain Lord (US) £35, Illusion of Gaia (US) £35, Equinox (UK) £25, all as new. Tel: (01831) 625323

●Mario Allstars, Alien 3, Nigel Mansell, Starwing, SFII £25 each. SFII £20 no box. Tel: (01349) 830332

●For sale: Final Fantasy III £45, Breath of Fire £35, Secret of Mana £30, Illusion of Gaia £45 swaps/offers. Tel: Ann on (0121) 6047524

●DK Cty £30 and Bomberman II £20 both UK. Tel: Andrew on (01457) 867928 after 6.30pm

●Super NES games for sale. Earthworm Jim £30, Street Racer £28, Barkley Shut up and Jam £22, Rock 'n' Roll Racing (no instructions – US) £18, Cybernator (US) £22, Brawl Brothers (US) £18, NCAA Basketball (no instructions) £15, Spin Dizzy £14. Tel: (01872) 552650

●For sale: DK Cty (UK) £40 – 2 weeks old! Stunt Race FX (UK) £30-35 – 1 month old! Phone James on: (01273) 834842

●Sell UK Kick Off III European Challenge for £25. Tel: (01986) 873456

●Jaki Crush (jap), NBA Jam (UK), UN Squadron (UK) Super Tennis (UK) Batman Returns (UK) SN Pro pad (not boxed). All boxed + booklets. £90. Tel: (0181) 8895147

●Stunt Race FX – Brand new, unused + boxed (obviously!) £30. Please tel: (01252) 338198

●Spectre £10, SFII Turbo £25, Tinytoons, Castlevania IV, Desert Strike, Flashback, Pugsley's SH £18 each, all boxed + instructions. Tel: (01789) 297773. Stratford area

●Bargain SNES games! £30 – Punch Out (US), FIFA (UK) NBA Jam (UK). £25 – Turbo (free RYU Model) (US), R 'n' R Racing (US), Sensi Soccer (UK). £20 – Cybernator (US), Tinytoons (US), Alien III (UK). Also Game Gear, car + mains adaptor, 4 in 1, Devilish, worth £150 now £45. Loads of mags (NMS, Total, Mean Machines) from £1! Tel: (0181) 697 6453

●Sim City Smash TV £10, Mario Kart + Pop £15, Turbo £20, FIFA, NBA Jam £25, Street Racer £30 or will swap for other good games. Call Rod on: (01273) 770741

●Do you want International Superstar Soccer new for £45, other games as well – send 60p + P+P to Chris Braisher, 50 Widford Rd, Hunsdon, Ware, Herts, SG12 8NW

●UK SNES Nintendo game Stunt Race FX £30, Nintendo Super Famicom game Final Fight 2 £25, Super Nintendo Datel Pro Action Replay cartridge £25. Tel: Gary on (01642) 597017 (Middlesborough)

●UK SNES, includes latest converter, 2 pads, 24 games, Secret of Mana (US) SSFII (US), Mortal Kombat 2 (UK), STF 2 Turbo, Striker (UK), NBA Jam (UK) Mario Allstars (UK) and many more. All for only £485 ono. Ask for Steve. Tel: (01709) 896172

SWAP

●Mario World (UK) or Blazing Skies (UK) for Dragon Ball Z II or SSF II. D Autier, 39 Oakington Manor Drive, Wembley, HA9 6LU

●MKII, Desert Fighter, Cannon Fodder, Syndicate, WWF Raw, Stunt Race FX, Lemmings, Mechwarrior. Will swap for Bart's Nightmare or UN Squadron (UK). Tel: (01329) 235924

●I will swap my Starwing (no box) for your Axelay (UK), Mechwarrior (UK) or Shadowrun (UK) Tel: (01533) 715392

●I'll swap my Mario Allstars for your Mega-lo-Mania, Mario Kart or Lethal Enforcers and gun for UK SNES. Tel: (01323) 844881

●SNES, Game Boy, CD32, Game Gear and Spectrum games for sale or swap. Tel: Malcolm (01463) 711205

●Swap my Out to Lunch (UK) and Action Replay for a decent game. eg. Super Street Fighter II, or buy for £18 each. Boxed with instructions. Also Mario Allstars (unboxed), swap for another unboxed game or sell for £12. Tel: (061) 430 8014. Ask for Craig. Weekdays after 6pm

●Does anyone want to swap their Neo Geo with Samurai Showdown and two controllers for my Mega Drive, 6 games, 4 controllers (inc one 6 pad) (top titles). Boxed, good condition. Other offers considered. Tel: (01622) 739347

●UK SNES 30 games, CSSF II, Fatal Fury II, MKII, DK Cty, 4 joypads, Multitap, Game Genie, universal adaptor (US). Looking for Neo Geo pad and games (CD) if possible. Tel: (01304) 210860

●Swap my RPGs for yours. Call for current list. Games are mainly US. Ask for Rachel. Tel: (01925) 490910

●Swap my Earthworm Jim, boxed with instructions, for International Superstar Soccer. Must be UK. Tel: (01553) 771649

●Swap my UK version of SFII or Super Tennis for 2 Game Gear games. Must include 1 Sonic game. Tel: (01865) 245123. Ask for Flat 79.

●I will swap Mario Allstars, Another World or F-Zero for an Action Replay MK2 or any decent game for the Super Nintendo. Tel: (01736) 757607

●Mortal Kombat (pal) for Final Fantasy II. Tel: (01372) 378060

●Swap any 2 of my games for one of yours plus £10. You must deliver by hand. I want Secret of Mana (US), Final Fantasy 3 or Zelda Link to the Past (US). Contact Ricky on (0181) 3687486

●Swap SNES SFII for Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts or any considered. Tel: (01472) 826950

●I will swap my Zelda, Legend of Mystical Ninja or my just bought Syndicate for your Boxing Legends of Ring or Smash Tennis. Call Steve on: (01271) 326639

●My SNES plus 15 games – all the best ones for 3DO and games. Please swap or sell for £25 ono. PJ Kimpton, 11 Tintern Ave, Dallington, Northampton, NN5 7BZ

●I will swap a NES with 3 games and light gun with 2 joypads, for an English or US version of Secret of Mana. Tel: (0121) 6028279

●Swaps: Street Racer IV, FIFA Soccer, MKI, Bart's Nightmare, Ghosts 'n' Ghouls 4, Aladdin, Spiderman X, Batman Returns, Earthworm Jim, Turtles in Time. Tel: (0181) 8544332

●Super Nintendo games swaps £4. Loads to choose from and Mega Drive games to swap. Tel: (0191) 4177940

●Swap SNES with 7 games for Jaguar with 2 games, preferably Doom. Bradford area. Tel: (01274) 371783

●Swap Starwing (US) or Castlevania 4 (jap) or Mystical Ninja (US) or Pocky & Rocky (US). I want Final Fantasy III (US) or Secret of Mana (US or UK). Also swap boxed US SNES with 17 games + AR and Game Genie. I want A600 or 1200 or A500. Tel: (0181) 3687486

MESSAGES AND EVENTS

●Over 330 hours of anime for sale or swap – 45 hours of DBZ alone! Phone Jan-Fei on (01734) 586030. Also tons of manga comics for sale.

●I want a pen pal with interests in manga, anime and music. Write to Peter Rushe, 10 Black Swan Lane, Luton, Beds, LU3 2LU

●Remote control car for sale (vanquish) in good condition. Worth £210 with extras. Will sell for £129. Phone: (01355) 302030

●Mags for sale or swap, Super Pro 1-11, Super Action 1-17, Super Control 1-17, Snes Force 1-8 and Go 2-20. £2 each/£100 the lot or swap for 85% rated games. Tel: (01708) 720478

●I am looking for a pen pal any age in any place in the world. Write to: Emmanuel Veloso, Rua Do Brasil, 193 1 Esg 3030, Coimbra, Portugal.

●Super Play mags 1-28 all in binders. They cost me £81.98 to buy, so will sell for £90 plus Gold for £10. Tel: (0117) 9684378

●Dragon Ball Z cartoons for sale (jap version), the Gohan Story £10 for each tape. Tel: (0181) 5567498. Ask for Sammi

●Over £100 worth of SNES mags inc. every issue of Super Play (except 1+20) + various other mags. All good condition £25, no offers. Must collect. Call Gary on (01695) 727077

●Super Play issues 1 to 27 inc, any offers? Will separate. Worcs area. Ask for Ritch! (PS. Slayer Rock!!!). Tel: (01684) 310369

●ANIME by Helen McCarthy in good condition £3.50. Mags: Super Play, Games Master, Total and others. £1 each or five for £4. Call Dunc on: (01934) 620343

●Rachel 20, wants contacts who are into games. I own SNES, PCE GB, NES, Sega, A1200, 3DO. I like RPGs, Anime. I live in Warrington. Tel: (01925) 490910

●A1 offers Nintendo magazine System issue 1 with timeboy, Mean Machines Sega issue 1 with video. Both mint, unopened, serious offers. SNES games Alien 3 £25, SFII £15 Capcom Arcade style powerstick (SFII joystick) works on all games and NES £30. Immaculate condition. Tel: (01443) 450119

WANTED

●Box and dust cover for American Final Fight. Must be perfect condition. £5. Must be London area. Call after 7pm. Tel: (0181 742 0253

●Super Nintendo + one control pad and SFII Turbo. Must be in good condition, boxed if possible. £60 waiting. Ask for Steven on: (0181) 2925654

●US SNES games, Equinox, Illusion of Gaia, Jurassic Park, Madden 94, Soldiers of Fortune, Actráiser, Super Tennis, Super Metroid, Pilot Wings. Must be boxed with instructions. Tel: (0151) 2640134

●Wanted desperately – Secret of Mana for £30. If you have it, please ring: (0151) 6322053

●Wanted Rock 'n' Roll Racing (pal). Will pay up to £25 or will swap for Zombies UK or FIFA Soccer UK. All boxed with instructions. Tel Steve on: (0114) 2331777. Sheffield area only

●Wanted: one pen pal aged between 11 and 13. My name is Richard Ellis and I like computers and music and swimming. Tel: (01428) 606751

●Final Fantasy Legend III for the Game Boy. Wanted urgently. Willing to pay £35 (no box or instructions). Tel: (01252) 782095 after 6pm and ask for G.P.

●Seeking penpals into any sorts of interests. Boy or girl 15+. Write to: Yvonne, 9 Edleston Rd, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 7HJ

●I want Breath of Fire, Soul Blazer or Final Fantasy II. Will pay reasonable amount or swap for GB + some games. Tel: (01622) 736094

●Will pay £20 for Bomberman 1 or 2 (2 preferred). Phone: (0181) 6544018 and ask for Tushar B, okay?

●USA SNES games, NHL'94, FFIII, Pebble Beach Golf, Addams Family II, must be boxed with instructions. Tel: (0151) 2650134

●SNES and Mega contacts wanted to swap games Tel: (01533) 762368 and ask for Stephen

HARDWARE FOR SALE

●UK SNES 3 pad + scope + 7 great games inc DKC + MKII. All boxed, mint condition. Worth £400 will accept £220 ono. Ask for Kev on: (01273) 707608

●UK SNES + 25 games + 2 pads inc. DKC, Stunt RFX, FIFA, Equinox, Street Racer + many more in vgc. All for only £450 ono. Tel: Andrew on (01628) 20964

●SNES (UK) 1 controller + 31 games inc MKII, FIFA, NBA Jam, SFII Turbo, Rainbow Bell Adv, Sensi Soccer, Zombies £250 ono + £7 P+P. Tel: (01946) 841362

●PC Engine GT, US version, PSU convertor and 6 games boxed. Hardly used. Cost £340 only £230 or nearest offer. Also US SNES and 9 games only £250 ono. Tel: (0181) 3378707

●US SNES for sale + 14 inch monitor. Comes with 6 games including Starwing and Mario Kart. Worth over £900, but I will sell for £295. Call Dave and leave contact no. Tel: (0181) 3010321

●NEO-GEO, 2 joysticks, 9 games, Samurai Shodown I + II, Kick Off 94, Side Kicks II, Viewpoint Baseball Stars I + II, Last Resort, NAM 1975, Sensible offers. Will split. Tel: (01270) 876612

●UK SNES, 30 games US adaptor, multitap about £900 – 1000 in all. Will accept good price. Tel: (01304) 210860

●Amiga CD 32 for sale lots of top games + mags all boxed £200 or swap considered. Tel: (01533) 830538

●UK SNES, 3 games including Starwing, Mario Allstars and Sim City, one joypad, £80 ono. Tel: (01472) 388720

●BARGAIN!!! Super NES with two controllers. A scart lead and 5 games incl. DK Cty and Mortal Kombat II all for £250 ono. Tel: Manchester 2489549

●I'm selling a Super GB for £30, also a normal GB, 8 GB games £150 (GB games also sold separately) + SNES adaptor £20. Tel: (01622) 736094

●UK SNES with Earthworm Jim, Mega Man X, Sunset Riders, Mystical Ninja and Tiny Toons, 2 joypads (one turbo) £220 ono. Tel: (01799) 541299

●Game Gear + Master convertor + 13 games incl. Sensible Soccer, Zool, Sonic 1 + 2 and Columns £150. Tel: (01376) 516889

●For sale Master System with Donald Duck, Lucky Dime Caper and adaptor £30. A Beach, 11 Kevan House, Wyndham Rd, Camberwell, SE5 0LP

●UK SNES, 10 games incl. MKII, DK,Super Bomberman, SFII Turbo, Convertor, 3 Controllers £200 or swap for decent BMX. Ask for Pete. Tel: (01532) 789604

●SNES (UK) 2 joypads, 80 games (inc. MKII, Street Racer, Punch Out, Mana, Lion King, Cannon Fodder, NBA Live + loadsa other decent games) Worth loads, sell for only £390 ono. Call Ben on: (01252) 713415

●Amiga 500+, many games, IMB RAM, joystick, mouse, TV modular, A500 and A1200 compatible. Good condition. Only £95 ono. Call Ben on (01252) 713415

●UK SNES, 12 good games inc. Mario Kart, MKII, Mario Allstars, NBA Jam, 4 controllers (3 commanders), Multitap, all boxed and instructions. £350 ono. Game Gear, 5 games, carry case, adaptor, Gear to Gear cable £150 ono Tel: (01634) 404544

●I will sell my NES with 3 games, 2 joypads and light gun for £60. Tel: (0121) 602 8279

●SNES UK computer for sale with Cool Spot, Zombies, Zelda 3, Super Metroid, DK Cty, Fifa Soccer, Action Replay + universal adaptor £200. Tel: (0181) 8889942

●SNES with 10 games inc. MKII, NBA Jam, MKII, Kick Off 3, Plok. Also scope + 30 mags. All for £220 ono. Tel: (01206) 795229

●Best of Mean Machines for sale containing issues 1-5 £25 or near offer. Also Games Master issue 1 for £12. Tel: (0181) 8686440

●US SNES 11 top games inc. SSFII, Secret of Mana, 3 pads, joystick, Action Replay, Multitap, Super Play 1 to 28, £300. Call (01753) 538005 and ask for David

●UK SNES, 2 pads, multitap, 10 games, Zelda, Super Metroid, World Cup USA 94, etc. All boxed with instructions, 21 issues Super Play inc 1 and 3. Buyer collects, £250 ono. Tel Rob on: (01229) 861418

●UK SNES for sale with 11 games inc. Secret of Mana, Stunt FX, WC Striker, FIFA Soccer, all UK will sell separately. Tel: (0181) 4465278

●Turbo Duo Super CD-ROM 2, US version boxed + 8 games £200. Tel: (01484) 606649

●Sega multimega, (a Mega Drive CD and a portable CD player) with two 6 button pads and 7 CD games, all in excellent condition. All worth £420. Sell at £260 or swap for 300 or CD. Tel: (0171) 2490787

●Jaguar 64 bit, the world's only 64 bit console, with one game (Cybernator) all new, boxed up and unused. Selling for £160. Phone after 6pm. Tel: (0171) 2490787

●UK SNES + 2 joypads, universal adaptor, 17 games, inc. FFIII, Secret of Mana, Street Racer, SFII Turbo, WC Striker. All boxed as new. Sell £499. Tel: (0181) 9483047

●UK SNES convertor, Multitap, carrycase, 13 classic games, all boxed mint condition. Ring Danny or Mat after 6pm for more details. (£280 ono) Tel: (01483) 35879

●SNES for sale, boxed, mint condition, 1 game SFII Turbo, score master joy stick (worth £45) Competition Pro pad + normal pad all for £100 (worth £165). Tel: (01323) 501946

●UK SNES for sale, inc. 3 joypads, Starwing (UK), Flashback (UK), Sim City (UK), Batman Returns (UK), Cybernator (UK), Mario Kart (UK), Desert Fighter (UK), Secret of Mana (US), Outlander (US), and SNES scope + convertor. Worth over £500 will sell for £350. Call Alex on (01932) 821602

●UK SNES with 2 pads, universal adaptor and 7 games, SFII Turbo, Sensible Soccer, Street Racer, Mario World, Mario Allstars, Super Tennis, John Madden. £190. Tel: (01606) 888645

●UK SNES 5 games inc. Syndicate, 2 joypads. Issues 1-30 of Super Play and SP Gold. All for £200 ono. No splits! or swap for Amiga 1200. Tel: (01875) 815574

●SNES 2 pads, 2 games + adaptor for £90 also 60+ magazine inc all issue of Superplay, £70 or £2.50 each. Please call between 4-8pm for Fasial. Tel: (01282) 457695

●UK SNES for sale incl. 2 controllers, over 10 games inc. MKII, SFII Turbo, Aladdin, Mario Allstars, nearly all boxed, vgc. Sell for £180. Ring only after 4pm on: (01204) 528632

●UK SNES 2 controllers, convertor, 7 quality games inc. Secret of Mana, Starwing, Pocky + Rocky. All boxed in mint condition £150 ono the lot. Tel: (01628) 23769

●SNES for sale (UK) top games MKII, SFII, F-Zero, Tiny Toons, Lost Vikings. Also for sale Game Boy with Tetris and Kid Karus with 35 recent mags (SNES). All for £160. Tel: (0131) 5380480

●Amstrad 6128 Plus, and colour monitor plus a Star ILC-20 printer, with over 35 games. Bargain price £150. Tel: (061) 430 8014 Stockport area

●UK SNES with 21 quality games inc. Secret of Mana, DKC, Metroid + Mario Allstars (all UK), 2 controllers, scart lead, Multitap, US/jap adaptor + over 200 issues of Super Play. Cost over £1200. Will sell for £650 ono. Tel: (0181) 8987666. Ask for Adam

FANZINE

●The Ultimate Tetris tips book. It's got everything: tips, tactics, high scoring, playing the faster levels, 2-player tactics and so much more. Send cheque/PO for £2.50 to Tetris Tips, PO Box 86, Stockport. Overseas orders please add £5.

●Wanted – writers for my RPG fanzine. All formats covered, Nintendo, Sega etc. You must be a true RPG fan and be able to play NTSC only games. Ask for Rachel. Tel: (01925) 490910

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'SMALL CUBES LACED WITH VINEGAR'

I have read your magazine from issue one, and have found that the quality is constantly improving. Alas, I do have one complaint. This is your *Star Trek: Bridge Simulator* review in *SP*29.

The reviewer (new boy Ed Ricketts) seemed to dismiss the game simply on the grounds of it being to do with *Star Trek*. He constantly slags off the TV series in the review. What has he got against *Star Trek*? And why must he be so arrogant as to keep taking cheap swipes at it? One remark is bad enough, but he goes over the top. Has he ever watched any episodes of the varied series, particularly the brilliant *Next Generation*? Maybe he should try. But if all else fails, maybe *he* should be cut into small cubes, laced with vinegar and thrown away.

Andrew Kitchener
Burgh Castle, Great Yarmouth

P.S. Isn't Ricketts a disease?

One thing Ed did attack in his first paragraph was the humourless sensitivity exhibited by some Trekkers* when their favourite TV series is subject to the slightest criticism. And you've fallen right into his trap by demonstrating just that, you Ferengi clown! Microprose's *Star Trek* sim was reviewed from a fannish perspective (*SP*20), so it was only fair to consult a different view. That our man Ricketts should quite enjoy the game itself, despite his loathing for the setting, surely tells us a lot more about it? We thoroughly agree with his fairly high rating of 77%.

* N.B. You call yourself a 'Trekkie', Andrew, but the hardcore fans now consider it derogatory and would have YOU sliced and diced for using the term. See what Ed meant about over-sensitive?

'I REALLY WAS LUXOR THE MOONPRINCE'

Wow! Waves of nostalgia wash over me. I wake in the dark reaches of the night, crying like a baby for my long lost Spectrum. My father never loved me because he blew the chip (*Eh?* – Ed). But why should I care? It's all James' fault, that's why. Not that my Dad broke my Spectrum, but because his little aside in his review of *Kirby's Tee Shot* opened up a festering boil in my soul wherein I had buried all my yearnings for playing games like we had in the good old days. (Fade in the Hovis ad music at this point if it pleases you. Then go and see a doctor.) "Night falls and the foul are abroad". I'll name that tune in one, Tom. 'Tis, of course, that hallowed classic *The Lords Of Midnight*. This game showed what you can do with real game design talent and only 48k to play with.

Back then, of course, the graphics, in all their 8 colour, UDG glory were revolutionary. Nowadays, don't they look crap? Which brings me nicely on to my main point. All the graphics in the world can't save a game from being crap. And vice versa. Gameplay maketh the game.

When playing *The Lords Of Midnight*, I really was Luxor the Moonprince, muscular, handsome warrior who slew 400 foul warriors before breakfast in his righteous battle against the evil hordes of Doomdark for the forces of good clean living...

Phew! I had to go for a bit of a lie-down.

I'm not saying graphics aren't important but probe the mists of time to ten years in the future (swirl, swirl). A wizened old game player (that's you, that is) sits before his pupils and says 'that platform-scrolly-beat-'em-up licence from the film Terminator VI – the morning after the night before™ may have the looks, but in my day we had *SFII* and *Final Fantasy III*. They might not have the graphics, but gameplay...'

Go on. See if you don't.

Michael Foster, Blackpool

'AUSTRALIA GETS SUPER'

I would like to know why Australia gets *Super Play* two months after its UK release? I have just purchased my December (no.26) issue in February. This would not be such a problem if the games that have been reviewed for that particular issue worked in parallel with their Australian release dates, but they don't. For example, in *SP*26 you reviewed *Vortex*, *Mickey Mania*, *Lemmings 2*, and *Animaniacs*. All these games have been available in Australia since December 1994.

Quintin Graham, Queensland, Australia

Our December issue reviewed all your December releases, and you say we're out of synch? My head hurts...

Much as we appreciate our loyal and widespread overseas readership, *Super Play* is a UK magazine with limited circulation. You're only able to buy it on the other side of the world because an independent Australian magazine distributor has imported a few bundles for your local newsagent. Thus, we have absolutely no control over that price tag placed on your issue; and whilst it may be cheaper in your local newsagent, you don't get it as soon as those who subscribe direct.

As for our review schedule, how would it sound if we wrote to an Australian games magazine and complained that they were biased towards an Australian audience? We'd feel a bit foolish, frankly. But wait, what's this?

'ONE, TWO OR EVEN THREE'

The point I'd like to raise concerns your reviewing policy. Excellent though it may be, it's just a shame that other mags review the major releases one, two, or even three (*Days? Weeks? Years?* – Ed) before

THE SUPER PLAY INTERESTING-O-METER

What will and what won't turn us on...

3D graphics – better than 2D?

Game endings – vital?

HOT

NOT

Virtual Boy

Killer Instinct

you do. What games am I talking about? Well, there's *MK2*, *SSFII*, *Earthworm Jim*, *DKC*, *NHL '95*... The list goes on. You reviewed *Syndicate* and *FFIII* near enough to their release dates: good, but being a SNES-only mag you should review all games before, if not on, their release date wherever in the world.

This may have seemed critical, but with all other aspects of *SP* being near-perfect I thought you should know about the one main fault that there is.

A.R.
Winchester

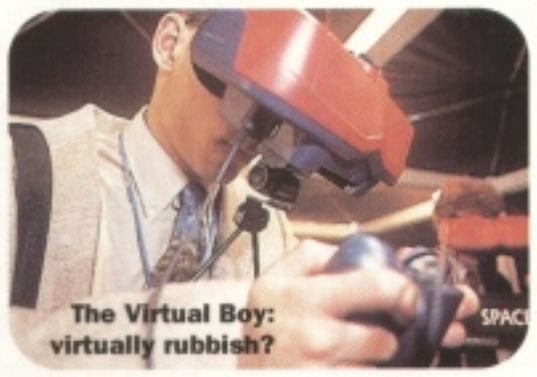
Hang on. Over the past several issues we've given you exclusive first reviews of major titles like *Final Fantasy III*, *Ultimate Parodius*, *Super Bomberman 2*, *Syndicate*, *Super Turrican II* – to name but a few – before any other British games magazine. So what are you talking about?

To review a game before its release date, you need to be given full permission (and a pre-production cartridge, natch) by the software house releasing it. This is usually impossible in the case of Japanese and US companies, who wish to deter the grey import market; but even the European outfits prefer to spread their exclusives between mags rather than always giving them to the same one. If we're not in their good books, further delays are incurred (witness *EWJ* and *Indiana Jones*).

Show me any magazine in recent history that has managed to review every game, worldwide, before release, and I'll show you a 500-page glossy catalogue with 30 editorial staff that costs £20 per month and only exists in your fevered imagination. But bear with us, and we'll keep trying...

'SNIGGER AT MARIO'

The Virtual Boy is in fact a rather complex machine. Many may snigger at *Mario Bros VB*, but in spite of this fact it is a bold step by Nintendo to lead us into this new era of gameplay. Sure, the games at the moment are sad, but come April, I think we could be in for a surprise. If the Virtual Boy did succeed in becoming popular it could represent a leap in gameplay a thousand times as big as the gap


The Virtual Boy: virtually rubbish?

between the Speccy and the SNES. Virtual Reality games are no good without gameplay: Nintendo has gameplay and VB. If Nintendo claims the VB is the next Game Boy, who am I to argue?

Richard Melville,
Exeter

If Nintendo asks you to hand over a large wad of notes, you have every right to argue. Dapper games like *Tetris*, *Zelda IV*, *Donkey Kong '94* and *Monster Max* might have bags of gameplay, but do you really think they'd have taken off if the Game Boy was priced at £200? Listen to this man, here...

'SEVERAL SANDWICHES'

Much as I admire this magazine's loyalty to all things Nintendo, I feel that you are placing too much faith in Nintendo's ability to deliver as far as Ultra 64 is concerned. There is much evidence to support this view, but most damning must be that Ultra 64 hardware is still not finalised – this despite claims from Nintendo that it will be ready for home release in Summer '95.

With the release of the Virtual Boy, I am really beginning to believe that Nintendo is several sandwiches short of a picnic. I can appreciate the reasoning behind the Virtual Boy having a monochrome display, but not the reasoning that expects us to pay $200 for it (which consumer electronics dictates will be £200). Also, with regards to the monochrome display, we've all heard the arguments concerning the drop in battery life, but Lynx owners will know that this need not be a problem. Also, image and battery technologies have advanced to the point where any loss in longevity is negligible.

Finally, perhaps I'm being extremely stupid, but I cannot follow Nintendo's logic in making us pay more for less. Virtual Boy – $200; Ultra 64 – under $200. That one makes sense.

Nemo,
Fife

Some well-considered points, certainly, but are you sure you've been reading *Super Play*? Our loyalty is to fellow SNES gamers like yourself, rather than a multinational corporation. We've always openly criticised Nintendo for making errors like the Virtual Boy (which we said should have stayed in the R&D lab) and misleading its customers (i.e. the specs claimed for the Ultra 64); but we're not afraid to congratulate them when they come up with the goods. That's the advantage of being an independent journal.

Incidentally, are you THE Captain Nemo? Because Wil would quite like a spin in the Nautilus.

'REALITY NEVER REALLY EXCITED ME'

Recently I read that *Zelda V* was to be a 3D Ultra 64 game. 'Shock! Horror!' I thought, 'I don't want that!' Call me Mr Ungrateful but I want a *Zelda V* Ultra 64 game with graphics far exceeding the utter splendour of *Chrono Trigger*. I don't want rendered graphics (although lovely in small doses, but not as a norm) or 3D, or multiplayers trailing after Link to annoy him, just huge pretty, playable difficult and classic Nintendo *Zelda*. *Secret of Mana* was good, very good, but single players such as myself whose friends seem to have 'grown out' of video games, must agree that the other two tag-alongs got a bit annoying at times.

FANTASY FINALE

'GOD PUNISHING ME'

I'm a fair man. I can put up with a few problems that my SNES throws at me (you know, on screen sprite gets stuck inside a platform, my battery back-up gets wiped) but a glitch in the end sequence?!! Of a role playing game?!!!! Of *Final Fantasy 3*??!!!!AAAAAAGHHHHHHH!!!! **@@??!! I've seen the end sequence over 10 times and each time, just after Gogo falls down the hole and starts blinking, each time; I get music, but no picture. EVERYTHING GOES BLACK!!! It's like reading an epic, 100 page exciting, intriguing, complex novel only to find that the last 10 pages have been bloody torn out!!! Is it my machine, adaptor, my game pak? Is it God punishing me for all the time I should have spent working instead of taking on Kefka and Co? There's got to be something you kind, understanding people at *SP* can do? Wil, Wil!? You must be able to sympathise after all the fighting, the friendship, the end of the world, after Kefka's defeat... IMAGINE NOT KNOWING WHAT HAPPENS TO EVERYONE!!! Anyone out there who can tape the end sequence, please write in with a contact number... *pleease*...

Guy Buckland,
Suicidal in Surrey

That's a real shame, Guy, because *FFIII* has one of the most incredible end sequences we've ever seen, on any system, ever. There's this clever bit where – (*screams and sobbing noises emanate from the Surrey region*) – er, no, I guess you don't wish to hear this, do you?

Let's see if somebody out there can help.

'SEEING IT IN A FANTASY'

Some weeks ago I bought *Final Fantasy III* on import after seeing it in a Fantasy Quest. I have now completed the game, although I have not found all of its secrets and have had around 80 hours of play on the cart in total. I use a Fire SFX adaptor and have had no problems with the game.

Rory Mooney
Alcester, Warks

We've heard from other Fire SFX users who claim that it generally works fine, but that you have to put up with occasional sprite glitches and crashes.

We're still not sure why the game should suddenly fade to black and die; but those coders at Square know the SNES inside out and it's probably caused by some of their unorthodox machine-stretching programming techniques.

HIGHLIGHTS

Dear *Super Play*, I am writing...
Almost everyone, everywhere
Sigh.

... And if *Killer Instinct* isn't brilliant I'll say Oi! Miyamoto, NO!
Phil, Cumbria
He had nothing to do with the game, actually, but we empathise with the sentiment.

If, in ten years time, I come home to see my 8-yr-old son hooked up to our home VR machine, talking to a digitised friend in Japan over the interVRnet, I'll just walk by, switch on my SNES and see if I can still better my time in the awfully addictive time trial of *Super Mario Kart*.
David Kestler, Herts
A son, two years from now, with all the latest hi-tech gadgets provided for him? Now that's family planning.

This paper goes all weird if you get it wet, unlike normal magazines.
John Foong, NSW, Australia
Where have you been reading it, exactly?

Why, just because of the Ultra 64's power, do companies think games have to be rendered or 3D? Whatever happened to intricate detail, orchestral soundtracks, or even playability?

I must say I was a bit disappointed with *Donkey Kong Country* and a little so with *Killer Instinct*. The graphics in *DKC* seemed almost too real, nothing like the cute but excellent graphics of *Mario*; it also didn't play as well as the *Mario* games. Rendered graphics are all rounded, shaded and fluid – fine for beat-'em-ups, but platformers and RPGs?

I feel I'm moaning a little too much, but it has to be done. And 'moaning' certainly is the key word as I move on to the Virtual Boy. What a nightmare! Headaches, black and red screens, poor games, Gameboy sound – I can't cope. Why didn't R&D1 just concentrate on developing and creating games for the Ultra 64? As it is, the Ultra 64 is Nintendo of America's baby, so will that mean it will be all Americanised and far from the Japanese culture that *Super Play* and her readers know and love? If R&D1 had focused its attention on the Ultra 64, we'd have it earlier and it would be more 'Japanese'. Instead, we find ourselves with what seems to be a sub-standard attempt at a home Virtual Reality system. Personally, Virtual Reality never really excited me that much and it's already a bit old hat. So all I'm saying is that the Virtual Boy could well turn out to be one humongous rancid boil of a mistake, costly to Nintendo and costly to us the consumer.

On a more wholesome note, I'm pleased to say that the RPG scene seems to be picking up. I was glad to see *Secret of Mana* in the shops for as low as £35, and even though I've had the American version for over a year, I almost bought it again because it was such a bargain.

Sam Dowler,
Elstree, Herts

There's no doubt that Japanese and American development is very different: you won't be surprised to learn that we favour the former.

The problem with Virtual Boy is that, at £200, it can't hope to

Top multi-coloured pyjama action!

achieve the same kind of sales as the cheap and cheerful Game Boy.

'PLAY, IF YOU WILL'

I'm in shock. I'm bored with *SSFII*. The explanation is simple: I have played *Killer Instinct*. I hate to say it, but I'm hooked. It combines all the best bits of *SFII*, *MKII* and *VF* and now suddenly a 3 hit Flaming Dragon Punch pales in comparison with a 22 hit Ultra whack-'em-200-meters-into-the-air combo (that isn't the official name). Anyway, to the point. Once it gets properly established, will there be a dedicated Future publication covering Ultra 64? Ultra Play, if you will? Of course you guys would have to do it (flattery will get you somewhere...).

Daniel Vydra,
Melbourne, Australia

Ultra 64 won't be appearing in the UK until next year, and we have to say that some coverage of the 'next gen' consoles has been a little premature. We'll always run news and views on current Nintendo affairs (like last month's *Killer Instinct* feature) but our prime concern is Super Nintendo, and will be for a long time to come.

WRITE NOW!

Send your letters to us. We read them all and, unless you're talking utter crap, we'll probably print them.

PLAYBACK,
SUPER PLAY,
30 MONMOUTH STREET,
BATH BA1 2BW.

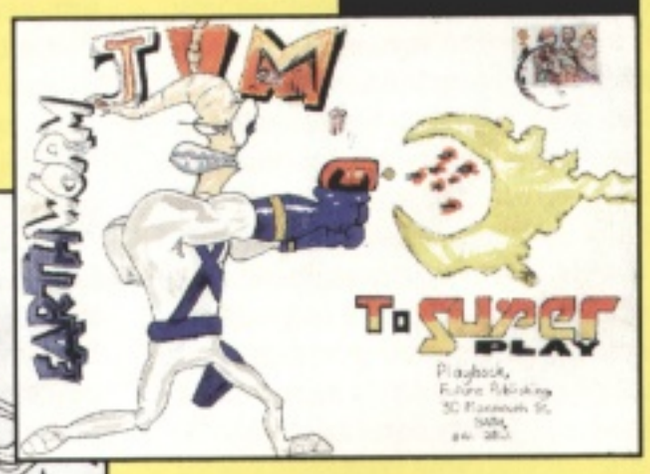
ENVELOPE ART!

Our postie's bag was just bulging with colour and talent this month. Take a gander at some of the art which brightened our day...

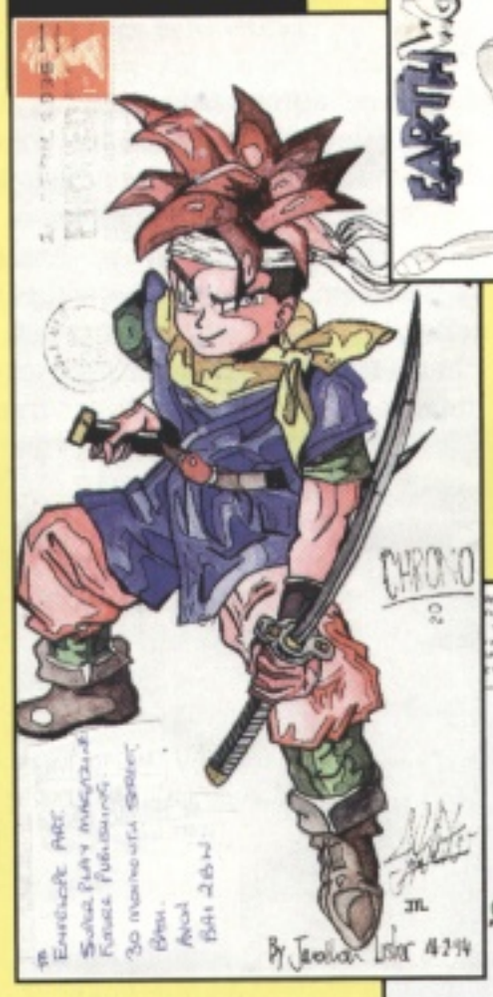
Jim Smith-Wright from Solihull sent us this wonderful portrait of Nuku Nuku. On the back of the envelope we discovered the other top piece of art.

WINNER

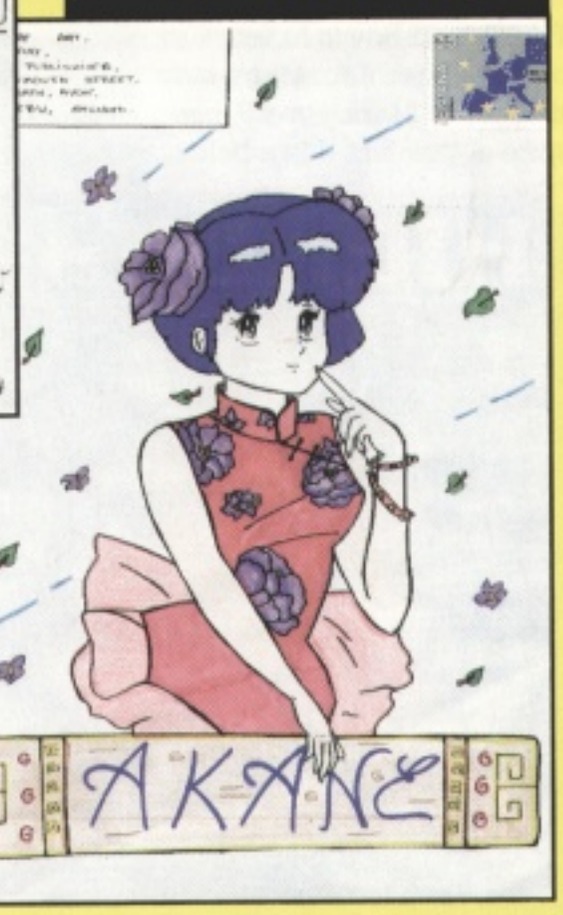
While Earthworm Jim has obviously made his mark on Ajay Chand from Glasgow.



***Chrono Trigger* is the inspiration for Jonathan Lister of N. Ferriby.**



Elizabeth Martin Paddison from Puerto de la Cruz in Tenerife has sent in this dainty picture of Akane from *Ranma 1/2*.



Simon McMahon from Brierly Hill in the West Midlands is responsible for sending in this Hong Kong Phooey alike.

Laz and Rag are proof that a lot of great art starts life in the Midlands.

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If we put these three amazingly interesting facts together, a bizarre link starts to form. In true Scooby Doo fashion we decided to investigate the mystery.

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WHAT CART?

There's no escaping it – the final instalment of What Cart? is upon us. And a special chemical we've used in the printing process means that if you don't read every word, your copy of Super Play will disintegrate overnight. What Cart? – your indispensable guide to a better cart-buying life.

PART FIVE • S – Z

S SUPER SMASH TV
UK/US/Jap/Acclaim/4Mbit — SP1 84%

So true to the coin-op, it's almost as if the original cabinet has somehow been shrunk and jammed inside your SNES. Ultra violent and highly accessible (although best played in bursts), *Smash TV* will forever nestle near the top of your cart pile.

SP SUPER SOCCER
UK/US/Jap/Human/4Mbit — SP1 83%

One of the original soccer for SNES games, but one that in the light of *Sensible Soccer*, *Kick Off 3*, *World Cup Striker* and *World Cup USA* looks and plays like the back end of a horse. So buy one of those instead.

P SUPER STAR WARS
UK/US/JAP/JVC/8Mbit — SP4 89%

15 huge levels, fab graphics, incredible music, a well-paced difficulty curve and drenched in atmosphere. It slows down slightly on occasion, but your SNES will thank you if you buy it a copy of this.

SB SUPER STREET FIGHTER II
Jap/Konami/32Mbit — SP23 96%

The joint highest scoring game ever in *Super Play*, the best beat-'em-up in the history of computer games, and quite possibly the most fun two people can have whilst still wearing their underpants. The game the Super Nintendo was invented for.

S SUPER STRIKE EAGLE
UK/US/MicroProse/8Mbit — SP8 61%

A flight sim to leave well alone. The graphics are horribly blocky, the gameplay lacks focus, and your plane handles so unresponsively that you have to throw half your tactics out of the window.

SP SUPER SUMO
Jap/Namcot/8Mbit — SP9 44%

The graphics are a hoot, and it knocks back a fair round of sumo (we'd imagine). But as a computer game, thumbs would seem to be pointing in rather a downwards direction. *Sumo Spirit* is slightly better as well.

S SUPER SWIV
UK/US/Jap/The Sales Curve/8Mbit — SP6 82%

Novel vertical blaster where one player takes control of a helicopter, and the other a jeep. It's far easier to play as the chopper though, which is annoying, and the graphics are a bit brown. Else: fab fun.

SP SUPER TENNIS
UK/US/Jap/Tonkin House/4Mbit — SP1 92%

A tennis game that'll appeal to tennis fans, non-tennis fans, and non-tennis-non-computer-game fans alike. The range of shots is huge, it's easy to get to grips with, and practice makes a notable and reassuring difference.

PZ SUPER TETRIS 2 & BOMBLISS
Jap/Bullet-Proof/8Mbit — SP5 83%

A solid rendition of the best puzzle game ever with lots of extra bits tacked on. *Tetris Battle Gaiden* is better though. And for another £20 you could get a Game Boy with the best version of *Tetris* ever, which is worth bearing in mind.

P SUPER TOM AND JERRY
UK/US/Tech Expressions/4Mbit — SP8 42%

One of the most promising licences ever flushes itself promptly down the toilet. It's far too easy, the gameplay is rubbish, there's screen flicker and slowdown, and Tom's hardly in it anyway. Utter tummyrot.

P SUPER TROLL ISLAND
US/American Softworks/8Mbit — SP20 70%

Based on those little rubber toys with naked pink bodies and silly sticking-up haircuts (much like Zy when he gets out of the shower, we'd imagine), *Troll Islands* is cheery, colourful and predictable platform fun, but only for the younger player.

S SUPER TURRICAN
UK/US/Seika/4Mbit — SP10 80%

The SNES may have smooth platform shoot-'em-ups coming out of its ears, but *Turrican* is one of the speediest, meatiest and slickest around. It plays well too, but don't hold your breath for any major-league thrills.

P SUPER VALIS IV
US/Jap/Telenet/8Mbit — SP 52%

It's totally linear, it's utterly contrived, and it's completely boring. Or, to put it another way, it's totally linear, it's utterly contrived, and it's completely boring. If you buy this then don't expect any sympathy from us.

SP SUPER VOLLEY
Jap/Video System/HAL/8Mbit — SP5 79%

Volley ball in an initially off-putting 2D perspective. Stick at it and the wealth of moves and the futuristic kill-your-opponents Speedball mode could merit some two-player fun, but giving up and getting a basketball game might be a better option.

S SUPER WIDGET
US/Atlus/8Mbit — SP12 54%

An entirely useless American platformer where 99% of the money was obviously spent on licensing Widget from whatever cartoon series it is he appears in, leaving only 1% to finance any decent programmers or 'ideas' people.

SP SUPER WWF
UK/US/Jap/Acclaim/8Mbit — SP1 74%

The graphics are great, and it's fun to play. But you'll only really want to play in short sessions. And the wrestlers all behave the same. And the tournament from the computer versions is missing. Which is why we only gave it 74%.

D SUZUKA 8 HOURS
Jap/Namcot/8Mbit — SP19 59%

The tracks are flatter than a pancake, the tunnel effect is a joke, and even at top speed it feels like you are chugging along at the speed of a milk float. You'd be hard pushed to squeeze more than eight minutes of fun out of *8 Hours*.

D SUZUKI AGURI
Jap/LOZC/8Mbit — SP5 72%

That's Suzuki as in top Japanese F1 racing driver Aguri Suzuki, of course, not as in Sukuzi motorbikes (ie. it's a car game.) But is it any good? Well, the split-screen two-player mode is, but you can't really see enough of the track for comfort.

KEY

PZ	PUZZLE
BD	BOARD
S	SHOOTER
P	PLATFORM
ST	STRATEGY
SP	SPORT
SB	Scrolling Beat-'Em-Up
A	Action
R	RPG
AR	Action RPG
SS	Super Scope
D	Driving

SYNDICATE

ST | UK/Ocean/8Mbit | SP26 80%

Hard-nosed strategy, wanton violence and an atmosphere so dark and heavy that you'll need IR goggles and nitrous oxide to play it. A great game on the PC, but unfortunately the control method and size compromise has ruined the SNES version somewhat.

SYO THE SEAL

P | Jap/Takara/8Mbit | SP8 79%

Your seal pup is one of the cutest characters ever seen, there are plenty of novel ideas too, and the weird water-based bonus game's a hoot. A bit off-beat, maybe, but well worth a try if you can get your hands on a copy.

SYVALION

S | UK/Jap/JVC/ 8Mbit | SP5 46%

Guide a long curling dragon through a set of horizontally and vertically scrolling mazes, and shoot things. Unfortunately it's tacky, dull, and lacks any real form of challenge. Still, it's your funeral.

TAZ-MANIA

D | UK/US/THQ/8Mbit | SP9 54%

The only running game on the SNES (like a driving game but on foot, which is why it's been categorised a 'D'.) The graphics are an optical banquet (and just like the cartoon), but the gameplay is by far and away too thin to constitute a sensible purchase.

TERMINATOR

P | UK/US/Mindscape/8Mbit | SP7 59%

An average film-based run-Arnie-around-lots-of-platforms shoot-'em-up that copes with the film side okay, has suitably *Terminator*-esque graphics, but fails to make much of a game. Whereas...

T2 JUDGEMENT DAY

P | UK/LJN/8Mbit | SP19 52%

...is another average film-based run-Arnie-around-lots-of-platforms shoot-'em-up that copes with the film side okay, has suitably *Terminator*-esque graphics, but fails even further to make much of a game. Whereas...

T2 THE ARCADE GAME

S | UK/Acclaim/Mbit | SP16 71%

...is the conversion of the *Operation Wolf*-style *Terminator* coin-op. And, whilst it may initially seem more entertaining than the above two games (you can use your Super Scope, incidentally), boredom is still likely to set in very quickly indeed.

TEST DRIVE II THE DUEL

D | UK/US/Accolade/8Mbit | SP6 58%

It's got proper gears and everything. But it's difficult to control, the graphics look a bit tawdry, and somehow it makes speeding along an open highway at 200mph in a Ferrari F40 seem as exciting as driving down to Sainsbury's in a Mini Metro.

TETRIS BATTLE GAIDEN

P | Jap/Bullet-Proof Software/8Mbit | SP18 86%

The idea is the same as the original, but with the added bonus that you can do things like remove lines from your stack or restrict your opponent controls. Cute backdrops, twee animations and in-game characters make this a worthy sequel.

3D BASEBALL

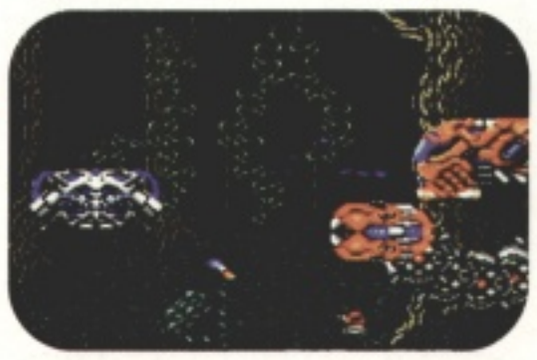
SP | Jap/Jaleco/8Mbit | SP19 63%

More options than you can shake a stick (or indeed baseball bat) at, but unfortunately most of them are in Japanese, which drags down the mark considerably. One of the SNES' other multitude of Baseball games will probably offer better value.

THUNDER SPIRITS

S | US/Jap/Toshiba/8Mbit | SP 73%

A conversion of the respected Megadrive game *Thunder Force 3*, *Thunder Spirit* suffers terrible slowdown and fails to exploit any of the special hardware tricks the SNES has up its sleeve. Don't let a Sega owner catch you playing this.



TINY TOONS WACKY SPORTS

SP | UK/Konami/8Mbit | SP25 78%

Featuring the ice-cream throw, the chicken dash, bungee jumping, log cutting and freestyle skiing, a wacky time is guaranteed to be had by all. But you wouldn't really want to bother without a couple of mates.

TIME SLIP

P | UK/Vic Tokai/8Mbit | SP14 60%

Tsk. The idea is there (even though it's been entirely nicked from the superb *Contra Spirits*), but the graphics and gameplay really aren't up to scratch at all. We ought to have Vic Tokai hung, strung and quartered for this.

TIME TRAX

P | UK/THQ/8Mbit | SP20 73%

Fantastic graphics with loads of great Mode 7 'transparent' effects and power-ups, ultra-responsive controls, natty secret sections, and hardly any annoying niggly bits either. The catch? It's so easy you'll finish it within two or three days.

TINY TOONS

P | UK/US/Jap/Konami/8Mbit | SP5 89%

It's Tiny. (Although the six levels are massive, so that's not true at all.) It's Toony. (Although you'll be needing a strong stomach to handle the sickly graphics.) And it really is quite loony (the bonus levels are a hoot.) There's bags of variety too.

TKO BOXING

SP | US/Sofel/4Mbit | SP 38%

Boxing games seem to always suffer the same fate: They are good for about ten minutes, but the gameplay is inevitably so simplistic that it all gets boring fast. And regrettably, *TKO Boxing* seems to be a prime example.

TOP GEAR

D | UK/US/Jap/Kemco/8Mbit | SP3 76%

There's a split-screen two player mode and it's very fast, and all in all it could be quite a good little game. But then you realise that you could buy *Mario Kart* or *Wildtrax* instead, and suddenly it doesn't seem quite such a good idea after all.

TOP GEAR 2

D | UK/Kemco/8Mbit | SP13 74%

Graphically superior to its prequel, but as with this now near-extinct type of driving game, all you really seem to do is keep your thumb on the accelerator while weaving from side to side for hour after hour. Tedious is most definitely the word.

TOTAL CARNAGE

S | UK/THQ/8Mbit | SP14 63%

The conversion of the *Smash TV* derivative coin-op. Except! Where's the all the gore gone? Except! What's happened to the big boisterous graphics? Except! Where's all the speech? *Total Carnage*? Half-hearted scuffle, more like.

TOYS

S | UK/US/Absolute/8Mbit | SP9 24%

Toys, the film, was a bit rubbish anyway, but this conversion is at least eight and a half times worse. The 3D perspective is ungainly, the weapons are near useless, the graphics are appalling, and it's far too hard to bother with.

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

TOP 5 SEQUELS

Almost everything is better second time round, and for the most part SNES games are no exception.

1 MORTAL KOMBAT 2 Acclaim

More gore, more death moves, more characters, and buckets more gameplay.

2 SUPER STREET FIGHTER 2 Konami

Better than *Street Fighter 2*, better than *Street Fighter 2 Turbo*. The best.

3 KICK OFF 3 Imagineer

Plays a far quicker, smoother and more competitive a game than in previous incarnations.

4 LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA 2 Konami

Such a long title that there's no room to tell you why it's so great.

5 THE ADDAMS FAMILY 2 Ocean

It's creepy, it's (er) knee-cool, it's even better than its prequel.

TRODDLERS

PZ | UK/Storm/4Mbit | SP11 79%

Cute puzzle game borrowing heavily from *Lemmings* where you have to guide hordes of little furry creatures to their safety. Clever, but the learning curve's a bit wonky and it somehow seemed more at home on computer format.

TROY AIKMAN NFL FOOTBALL

SP | UK/Electronic Arts/12Mbit | SP26 77%

Amusing Hannah-Barbera-style graphics, a freer choice of formation than *Madden '95*, and tons of options. But the tactics you select seem to be more important than your joypad skill, so you really need to be an American Football connoisseur to get anywhere.

TRUE LIES

S | UK/Acclaim/8Mbit | SP30 74%

Rather like the *Addams Family* game. Quite a bit of exciting blasting, but frustration will creep in when you can't get the angles exactly right. Learn where everyone is and you'll go far. But make sure that you want to.

TURN AND BURN

S | US/Absolute/16Mbit | SP20 71%

Turn and Burn is... a *Top Gun* clone pitting you in an F-14 Tomcat against an unknown foe, lacking the depth of its computer-based counterparts, and falling uncomfortably between an action-based blaster and a simulation. So now you know.

TURTLES IV

SB | UK/US/Jap/8Mbit | SP2 84%

On the good side, the graphics are superb, the characterisations are clever, the gameplay is frantic, there are loads of levels, and it's fun, fun, fun. But on the downside, it's repetitive, and quick to finish. Pity, that, although...

TURTLES TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS

SB | UK/Konami/16Mbit | SP15 90%

... makes up for it considerably. There are loads of moves, locations and characters; the inertia of the characters is perfect; and as something of a novelty the Death moves are implemented by a 'Rage Gauge'. The next best thing to *SF* and *MK2*.

2020 SUPER BASKETBALL

SP | Jap/KAC/12Mbit | SP8 85%

Another baseball game. But wait! This one's got a bizarre mix of armoured clad Speedball-type guys, gals and R2D2 droids, and it's brilliant fun to boot. In fact, if we hadn't seen the slightly superior Neo Geo original we'd probably have scored it even higher.

ULTIMA VI

AR | US/Origin/16Mbit | SP22 45%

An Action RPG in principle, but where the 'Action' bit is nothing more than a one-player *Gauntlet* where everything suddenly stops for you to take turns to fight, and the 'RPG' is next to useless anyway. Avoid.

ULTIMATE FOOTBALL

SP | Jap/Sammy/8Mbit | SP 51%

American Football – what a crazy sport, eh? Still, that needn't have prevented *Ultimate Football* from being a decent game. But the scope and technical merit is so limited that even the most die-hard of American Football fans is going to be disappointed.

ULTIMATE PARODIUS

S | UK/Konami/16Mbit | SP27 85%

Nicer graphics and more options and characters than the other instalments, but no change on the slowdown and initial lack of challenge. But for straight shoot-'em-up fans, its arrival will be more welcome than a phonecall from the Littlewoods pools.

ULTRAMAN

SB | UK/US/Jap/Bandai/9Mbit | SP 35%

At first it's laughable; a ridiculous-looking giant superhero beating up monsters that look like people in rubber suits. But after a very short time, you'll realise how ludicrously thin the gameplay is. And "what a waste of time," you'll think.

ULTRASEVEN

SB | Jap/Bandai/8Mbit | SP9 45%

Tacky Godzilla-style beat-em-up packed with hilarious space monsters. It may be funny at first, but once you've seen all the monsters, you'll never want to insert the cartridge into the top of your SNES again.

UNCHARTED WATERS

ST | Jap/Koeii/8Mbit | SP7 37%

Re-painting the Sistine chapel, watching a re-run of every episode of Neighbours, having your toe nails pulled out with a pair of industrial pliers. Quite honestly, anything would be better than *Uncharted* 'naval strategy' *Waters*.

UNIRALLY

R | UK/Nintendo/4Mbit | SP29 85%

It looks rubbish, but racing a unicycle against a mate around tonnes of tracks has never been so much fun; and ideal for people who like shaving hundredths of a second off their best time. So *Mario Kart* fans should lap it up.

USA ICE HOCKEY

SP | Jap/Jaleco/8Mbit | SP8 60%

Nicer graphics than Electronic Arts' *NHLPA*, but the action is less zappy, and the controls harder to cope with. It also slows down horribly, the goalies are rubbish, and the puck doesn't even seem to work properly. So 60% sounds a bit generous, actually.

USHIO AND TORA

SB | Jap/Yutaka/8Mbit | SP7 35%

A beat-'em-up. Except it seems to consist of a chain of end-of-level baddies, and you only have two moves. And as you have infinite credits you could finish the game on your first game anyway. So what d'you reckon? That's right: Don't bother.

UTOPIA

ST | US/Jaleco/8Mbit | SP14 86%

The thinking man's strategy romp; an absorbing *Sim City*-type affair with lots of depth; a classy game that is guaranteed to keep you up after bedtime; almost as good as *Populous 2* even. Hard to describe, but easy to rate. And it rates great.

VANNA WHITE'S WHEEL OF FORTUNE

PZ | US/Gametek/4Mbit | SP2 19%

A tedious quiz-show conversion where half the answers are unguessable Americanisms anyway. The pictures of the sumptuous Vanna explain why this scores at all, because to be honest a new single by Kajagoogoo would have been more exciting.

VIRTUAL SOCCER

SP | UK/Hudson Soft/8Mbit | SP13 87%

So why virtual? Do you have to wear a big plastic helmet? No. Is somehow almost soccer, but not quite? Nope. Is it because the pitch spins, and pans, and offers lots of choices of perspective? Yep, that's right. It plays a mean game of soccer as well.

VOLLEYBALL TWIN

SP | Jap/Tonkin House/8Mbit | SP4 76%

Volleyball from the people who brought us *Super Tennis*. The slow scrolling tends to knacker your chances of receiving the ball from time to time, but otherwise it plays pretty solidly, especially in Beach Volley mode.

VORTEX

ST | UK/Sony/4Mbit | SP26 90%

Super FX game number three: You play a robot transformer and traipse your way through 10 missions, transforming between humanoid/plane/tank and steam-roller form, killing things. And, once you've mastered the controls, it's totally great.

WAIALAE COUNTRY CLUB

SP | US/Jap/T & E Soft/8Mbit | SP 82%

The second of three golf games all using the same game engine (the others are *Augusta Golf* and *Pebble Beach*) but all representing different courses. It's accurately depicted, but as a golf series it's expensive and has aged badly.

WARPSPEED

S | UK/US/Accolade/8Mbit | SP7 32%

Hey! You know *Wing Commander*? Well, this is a crudely presented rip-off, with a silly use of Mode 7 (so you can never get more than one enemy on screen at a time) and, oooh, loads of other crappy bits too. And we said it looked dated back in issue 7.

WAYNE'S WORLD

P | UK/THQ/8Mbit | SP9 26%

Nice sound effects, nice pics of Wayne and Garth but, er, where's the gameplay gone? Don't ever ever buy this game. In fact, if you ever even see a copy, we advise you to destroy it asap.

WILD GUNS

A | Jap/Natsume/8Mbit | SP24 87%

A bit like *Lethal Enforcers*, but with faster more impressive graphics, loads more gameplay, a simultaneous two-player mode and the perfect learning curve. You see, it is okay to pilfer ideas provided you improve on the original.

WILDSNAKE

PZ | US/8Mbit | SP29 70%

It's like *Tetris*, but instead of coloured blocks, coloured snakes (yes, snakes) fall down, disappearing when certain bits of one snake touch certain other bits of other snakes which are the same colour. Snaketris, if you like.

WILDTRAX
D | UK/US/Jap/8Mbit | SP22 93%

From the moment the cheeky cart-recognition horn parps forth to the moment you switch off your SNES to avoid your brain pouring out of your ears onto the floor, you will be in love. A SNES without *Wildtrax* is almost a SNES not worth switching on.

WING COMMANDER
S | UK/Mindscape/8Mbit | SP5 60%

A big 3D spaceship sim/shoot-'em-up type thing. Except the interactive movie bit is annoying, the gameplay is a lot of flying and not much shooting, and these days it's pretty obvious that the original PC version wasn't much cop anyway.

WING COMMANDER SECRET MISSIONS
S | UK/Mindscape/8Mbit | SP13 64%

Slightly improved graphics but everything else wrong with the original game still shines through. Possibly that score should be lower to scorn the fact that none of the real faults from the original were sorted out second time round.

WINGS II
S | US/Namco/4Mbit | SP2 71%

World War I based flight sim which suffers from technical and graphical limitations. You can't actually land or take off for example, and the ground seems to be the same bit of turf repeated over and over. Your plane handles well, though.

WINTER OLYMPICS
SP | UP/US Gold/16Mbit | SP20 39%

As far as multi-event sports sims go, you couldn't hope to find one as boring, confusing, frustrating, uncontrollable and badly designed as this. In fact, you'd be hard pushed to find a game of any genre any less enjoyable.

WIZARDRY V
R | US/Capcom/8Mbit | SP21 39%

It's slow, tedious, utterly pointless, and completely inexcusable. Capcom deserve a brick through the window for every copy they manage to flog to the unsuspecting public for this one. The basts.

WOLFENSTEIN
S | UK/Imagineer/8Mbit | SP8 78%

The ultra-violent PC *Doom*-clone on the SNES? Ambitious, maybe, but the SNES can't quite handle the 3D properly, and half the gore and the Nazi reference is bizarrely missing. The missions have little variation, but there is fun to be had.

WOLVERINE – ADAMANTIUM RAGE
SB | UK/Acclaim/16Mbit | SP28 60%

Neatly coinciding with our X-Men feature we ran in issue 28, but rather more unfortunately also coinciding with some dull recuperative gameplay, terrible collision detection and predictable cliches.

WORDTRIS
PZ | US/Spectrum Holobyte/8Mbit | SP6 40%

Tetris where you make words out of falling letters. But they fall so fast that it turns into a game of luck. And then you discover that you can keep using the pause button, so the entire point of the game is utterly destroyed. For heaven's sake.

WORLD CLASS RUGBY
SP | UK/Jap/Audiogenic/4Mbit | SP6 74%

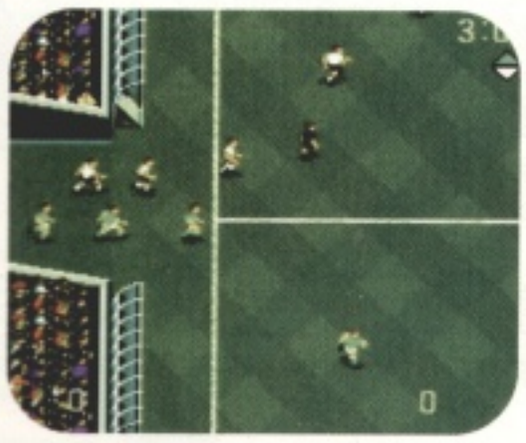
Rugby, on your SNES. It plays well with only a few gripes (far too many rucks, not enough strategies, and too many halts to show you the scoreboard), but it could convince you of the suitability of rugby for computer conversion.

WORLD CUP STRIKER
SP | UK/Elite/8Mbit | SP20 91%

Striker was brilliant (*SP10* 89%), and this is even better. Expect battery back-up, four new tournaments, expanded controls, larger players, improved gameplay and a World Cup tie-in. It's a bit more of a version 1.1 than a follow-up, though.

WORLD CUP USA '94
SP | UK/US Gold/12Mbit | SP21 92%

Forget *Sensible Soccer*. *World Cup USA* is faster and has more options and bigger players. Forget also *Virtual* and *FIFA Soccer*, *USA* has got all the good bits from those too. And *Kick Off 3*? Nah – this is even better than that. Buy, buy, buy.



WORLD HEROES
SB | US/Sunsoft/16Mbit | SP14 77%

World Heroes is a one-on-one beat-'em-up featuring a fireball-throwing Japanese bloke, a fascist dictator-type, a token girl and – hang on. Sounds like *Street Fighter II* again, doesn't it. And predictably, it's only about half as good.

WORLD HEROES 2
SB | US/Sunsoft/16Mbit | SP14 77%

There is more to life than *Street Fighter 2*, and *World Heroes 2* may well be of use to those who still seek more beyond *Mortal Kombat 2*. *Heroes 2* improves over the original considerably, and possibly qualifies for Best NEO GEO conversion ever.

WORLD SOCCER
SP | UK/Electro Brain/8Mbit | SP14 29%

Hey! Don't buy this. *World Soccer* may have been the first football game to use Mode 7, but that doesn't stop it from being the worse football game ever on the SNES. Which, considering the amount of duffers about, is quite an achievement

WWF RAW
SP | UK/Acclaim/24Mbit | SP 84%

The sequel to *Rumble* (so read that first), featuring more of the same (more moves, more characters, more money for Acclaim) in glorious 24Mbit. You can now tag, brawl, free-fight and take part in tournaments as well.

WWF ROYAL RUMBLES
SP | UK/Acclaim/16Mbit | SP10 79%

All your favourite WWF wrestlers in a game that'll have you crying with laughter, although possibly more at it than with it. One of the better comedy beat-'em-ups, but not really one of the most long-term playable games about.

XANDRA'S BIG ADVENTURE
P | Jap/Namco/8Mbit | SP1 88%

A bit of an obscure one, maybe, but your central character is great (a cute green pitchfork-wielding jelly baby, no less) and the controls are versatile. There's a lot more on offer than there first appears. In fact, only the Japanese text ruins it.

XARDION
A | US/Jap/Asmik/8Mbit | SP 26%

From the makers of D Force comes another disaster – a terrible ESWAT clone. You control a robot through different zones, each with a guardian. Sounds okay, but dreadful graphics, awful sonics and pathetic gameplay and structure ruin it.

X-KALIBER 2097
P | US/Activision/8Mbit | SP20 68%

How exactly do you turn a platform slash-'em-up into a great game? A tricky question, maybe, but sticking in some secret bits, animating the characters decently, and making the two-player mode playable would have been an idea. Whoops, eh *X-Kaliber*?

X-MEN APOCALYPSE
SB | Jap/Capcom/16Mbit | SP28 52%

Another totally wasted X-Men tie-in, with no particular problems other than it's a scrolling beat-'em-up with nothing to distinguish it from a things that were appearing on the Amiga and ST in 1990.

X-ZONE
SS | US/Kemco/4Mbit | SP6 55%

Cast very much in the mould of *Battle Clash* et al, in that things whizz around the screen and have to be shot. (With your Super Scope, of course.) But it ends up feeling little more than an elaborate version of *Space Invaders* where you can't move. Pah.

YOSHI'S COOKIE
PZ | Jap/Bullet-Proof Software/4Mbit | SP11 76%

Fun Tetris clone with biccies instead of blocks. It just about maintains the quality of the *Mario* line, but the gameplay seems to rely more on reactions than strategies, and its long-term addictiveness is doubtful.

YOSHI'S SAFARI
SS | Jap/Nintendo/8Mbit | SP12 69%

The best Super Scope game yet, with enough going on in the periphery to keep your interest to the end. Except that's only going to take about half an hour, and second time round the tedium of all the other Super Scope games sets in. Doh.

YOUNG MERLIN
AR | UK/Virgin/16Mbit | SP16 77%

An arcade adventure very much in the style of the computer 'classic' *Dizzy*, ie. you explore the accessible game zone to find the object you need to pass the latest hazard. Ad nauseam. It's quite big and has got nice graphics, though.

YS III
R | US/Jap/Tonkin House/8Mbit | SP 72%

Not as good as the PC-Engine CD-ROM prequels, but still a top quality RPG. Instead of an overhead view of the landscape, you get a scrolling side-on perspective. And although it's not as big as the first two game, it's still top fun.

ZELDA: LINK
AR | UK/US/Jap/Nintendo/8Mbit | SP2 93%

A brilliantly designed and executed adventure that puts similar games to shame, even though it's not quite as long and drawn out as the previous NES *Zelda* games (of which a *Mario All-Stars*-style compilation would of course be great, eh Nintendo?)

ZOKU THE LEGEND OF BISHIN
D/SB | Jap/Magifact/16Mbit | SP19 58%

One of the weirdest games to ever turn up in the *Super Play* office. You drive from A to B, get out of your car and scrolling beat-'em-upping your way to C, then drive to D and so fourth. Why? Oh – and don't.

ZOMBIES ATE MY NEIGHBOURS
S | UK/US/Konami/16Mbit | SP12 89%

An innovative shoot-'em-up with plenty of monsters and lasting appeal. If for some reason you decided to make your SNES cart collection in reverse alphabetical order, then *Zombies* would make a fair choice to start with indeed.

ZOOL
P | UK/Gremlin/8Mbit | SP16 65%

Despite fabulous graphics and great music, what was thought to be fab on the Amiga platformer looses it somewhat in conversion. There's no specific bad points. It's just that there are so many better platformers available for the SNES. And, er, that's it.

NEXT MONTH

Er... that's it. No more. We've come to the logical conclusion that is the end of the alpahabet.

BACK ISSUES

ISSUE 1 – 3 *SOLD OUT*

ISSUE 4
Human Grand Prix reviewed; and a player's guide to *Another World*.

ISSUE 5
Game Genie vs Action Replay; plus *Assault Suits Valken* and *Kikikaikai*.

ISSUE 6
Starfox previewed; *Super SWIV* reviewed; *SFII* guide.

ISSUE 7
Starfox reviewed; fantasy game special; and lots more!

ISSUE 8
Pop'n Twinbee and *James Pond* reviewed; a player's guide to *Starfox*.

ISSUE 9
Loads on *SFII Turbo*; *Super Bomberman* challenge; an *Addams Family* guide.

ISSUE 10
Fixing your SNES; *Final Fight* and *Striker* reviewed; and a *Mystical Ninja* guide.

ISSUE 11
Super Mario Collection, *SFII Turbo* and *Mortal Kombat* reviewed; a *Final Fight 2* guide; and much more!

ISSUE 12
A fantasy game special; an interview with Nintendo Hotline; and much more!

ISSUE 13
A football special, *Jurassic Park*, and *Top Gear* reviewed.

ISSUE 14
NIntendo's pricing policies; the horror of anime; *Sky Blazer*, *Clay Fighter* and *Plok!* reviewed; and more!

ISSUE 15
What's in store for 1994?; *Aladdin* reviewed; and a *Jurassic Park* Super Player's Guide. Hurrah!

ISSUE 16
R-Type III and *NBA Showdown* reviewed; those Rik Mayall ads; and more SNES troubleshooting.

ISSUE 17
Mega Man X and *NBA Jam* reviewed; Nintendo rap; *Solstice II: Equinox* and *Shadowrun* guides. Cor!

ISSUE 18
CES news; *Lufia*, *Super Puyo Puyo* and *Soccer Kid* reviewed; and a *Turtles* player's guide.

ISSUE 19
Fatal Fury 2 reviewed; a *Mystical Ninja 2* guide; we visit Nintendo of Japan; plus a free manga book.

ISSUE 20
Super Metroid [illegible] football special; [illegible] *X* guide; and how [illegible] of cheap carts.

ISSUE 21
Vortex previewed; *Super Bomberman 2* and *Dragon* reviewed; and a *Clay Fighter* guide.

ISSUE 22
Wild Trax reviewed; How to draw anime; exclusive *Syndicate* feature; *NBA Jam* guide and more!

ISSUE 23
Super Street Fighter II reviewed; exclusive Squaresoft interview; *Super Metroid* player's guide.

ISSUE 24
Mortal Kombat reviewed; *Breath Of Fire* reviewed; *Super Street Fighter II* player's guide.

ISSUE 25
Sparkster and *Secret Of Mana* reviewed; *Mortal Kombat II* player's guide; plus loads more.

ISSUE 26
Final Fantasy III, *Illusion Of Gaia* and *Syndicate* reviewed; *MKII* player's guide; and much more!

ISSUE 27
Donkey Kong Country and *Demon's Blazon* reviewed; *Rock 'n' Roll Racing* tipped.

ISSUE 28
Samurai Spirits, *Cannon Fodder* and *Clayfighter 2*; plus *DKC* player's guide.

ISSUE 29
X-Men Special; *Pinball Fantasies* and *Ardy Lightfoot*; and part 2 of the *DKC* guide.

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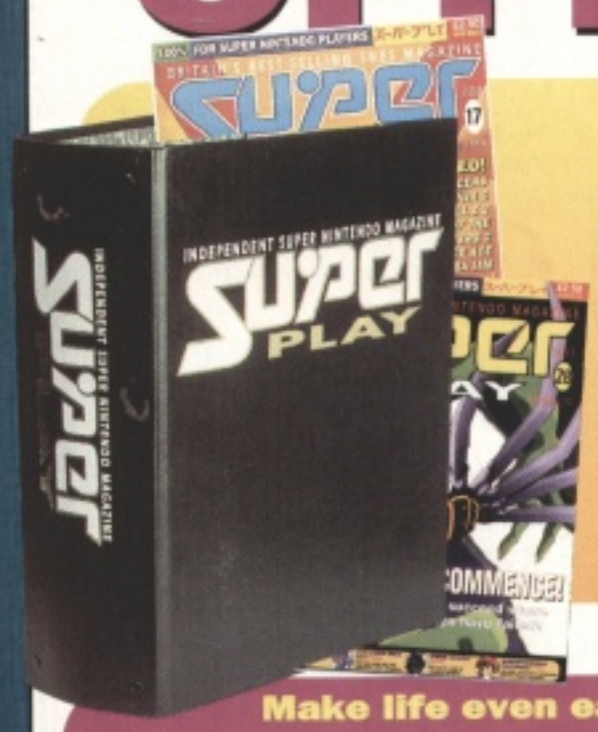

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ISSUE 30
Huge *Mega Man* feature, *Killer Instinct* guide; *True Lies*, *NBA Jam* and *International Superstar Soccer* reviewed.

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OH MY GODDESS Vol 1
Moonlight and Cherry Blossom
Anime Projects
26 minutes (subtitled) RRP: £12.99
U

Let's face it, Japanese kids are just so unlucky. They can't even phone for a pizza without getting hassled by beautiful young goddesses, demanding to grant them a wish. But when Belldandy appears to shy and insecure college student Keiichi, he thinks on his feet and wishes that she could stay with him forever, rather than fluffing it like anyone else would and asking for more pepperoni. So, with lovely magical girlfriend in tow, this smash hit romantic comedy OAV finally makes its UK debut. The first thing that really hits you about *Goddess* is how well the animators have managed to capture the delicate nature of the original artwork by Fujishima Kosuke. You'd be hard pushed to notice the distinct lack of animation through the haze of soft-focus, and wonderfully drawn backgrounds.

I would hate to say that this is an anime for girls (especially as I know quite a few boys who'd be more than happy to watch it), but more than any other OAV I've seen released in this country, *Oh My Goddess* could help anime cross the very definite sexual barrier that exists for both anime and manga in this country.

We've also had some letters into us here at *IP*, complaining about our bias towards subtitling, and sure enough, here's another title that works ten times better in its original language. American actors might be able to scream off a barrage of profanities with no trouble, but *Oh My Goddess* requires a delicacy of touch that it seems only the Japanese voice actresses can deliver. And don't worry, there isn't so much dialogue that you won't be able to keep up with the subtitling.

The only trouble I can see with *Goddess* is its price tag, which, with only a 26 minute running length, doesn't make it the best value for money of all time, but this is definitely a high quality show. Buy it under the pretext of getting it for your girlfriend and prove that even anime fans can be romantics.

Wil Overton

4 out of 5

NINJA SCROLL
Manga Video
94 minutes
RRP: £13.99
18

It is the Middle Ages, and Japan is a feudal country, knowing only bushido – the way of the blade. It is a dangerous time – every day people forget the way of the blade and cut themselves nastily. Only the brave are free (albeit covered in small scars).

Jubei is a wandering ninja. Having no master, he's free to travel around Japan, doing ninja-type odd jobs for a few gold pieces. He is just and fair, and has immense, almost supernatural powers. He's also got a casual manner, not unlike Bruce Willis in *Die Hard*.

At one village, though, there's a problem. A man-beast with incredible strength and the most magnificent double throwing-blade is chopping up folk. He kills everyone except a pretty girl, who he tries to snog. This turns out to be a mistake because not only is the girl a resourceful ninja herself, but Jubei turns up and gubs the monster very hard in the eye.

Battle after battle follows, and the level of violence is really quite astounding. This, combined with the medieval setting, gives *Ninja Scroll* a tough, gritty and atmospheric feel. It's a nice change to get away from the Tokyo-destruction-fleeing-schoolkid scenarios for a bit, and head towards a more simple tale, told with impressive pace and lots of nicely-drawn details.

Also good to see is the lack of complexity here. Although there is magic and demonry everywhere, it seems fitting in the feudal Japanese countryside, and the story is thus more followable. It's not too slow, either; Jubei's life is beset by attacks and double-crosses, and he spends most of the time unsheathing his katana, uttering a few cynical words, leaping about 90 feet in the air and cleaving folks' skulls off. And it's great.

Criticisms? It looks so suitably ancient that the dubbed soundtrack jars. Did people really say 'Get up off the floor, already' to each other in 15th century Okinawa? Possibly, but it's unlikely. Nonetheless – *Ninja Scroll* is a good yarn, and as action-packed as you'd like.

James Leach

4 out of 5

MACROSS PLUS – Vol 1
Manga Video
45 minutes
RRP: £9.99
PG

I must admit, that when I read the press release for this new *Macross* adventure, I totally dismissed it as being produced by the usual un-informed PR hype machine. After all, I never really thought of *Macross* being like *Top Gun*. Sure, it's got the plane-like Valkyries in it but it never was an all action flyboys adventure. Yet, what do we have here, if it's not a *Top Gun* adventure?

Isamu Dyson is a particularly arrogant flyboy who instead of merely being drummed out of the service is given the chance to redirect his energies in testing out the new generation of Valkyries on Planet Eden. But it's not long after his arrival that he's back in the thick of things with rival pilot Guld Bowman, an old flame and yet another singing idol. This time a computer generated one who goes by the glorious name of Sharon Apple Galaxy (what *Macross* plot would be complete without one).

It may be that this new *Macross* is just a bit slow in finding its feet and although there are more than enough excellently executed and animated aerial sequences the first episode just didn't seem to hang together. There's no mention of the *Macross* fortress or Lynn Minmay and even the flowing lines of Haruhiko Mikimoto's original character designs have changed into the huge pointed noses of new designer Masayuki.

The new Valkyrie fighters are what really steal the show in *Macross Plus*. The animators have obviously spent a lot of time studying real footage of fighter planes in action and this is really the only place where the show comes alive. In subsequent episodes computer graphics also begin to feature more heavily, being relegated to only the title in this first installment.

I've got mixed feelings about this series. I really enjoyed the recent *Macross II*, but this seems to have divorced itself from the original quite a bit. Approach with caution.

Wil Overton

3 out of 5

BLE es

Unclip that 30 ton assault suit, brew up a cuppa, and settle down in front of the atomic furnace. Just in time for this month's videos.

VIDEO DIARY

APRIL 1995

Another 'as up-to-date as we can possibly make it, given the volatile nature of the video market' release schedule. All tapes are dubbed into English unless otherwise stated. Happy buying!

MANGA VIDEO
NEW DOMINION TANK POLICE – Act 5
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LEGEND OF THE 4 KINGS – Vol 3 (Eps 5&6)

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ADVENTURE DUO – Vol 3 (subtitled)

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ANIME PROJECTS
OH MY GODDESS! – Vol 2 Midsummer Night's Dream (subtitled)
BUBBLEGUM CRISIS 2 – Born To Kill (dubbed)
URUSEI YATSURA TV Series – Vol 5 (subtitled)

WESTERN CONNECTION
USHIO AND TORA – Vol 4 (Eps 7 & 8) (subtitled)
SLOW STEP – Vol 2 (Eps 3 & 4) (subtitled)

IP NEWSLINE

Apparently the rumour that Japanese smash (and merchandise money spinner) *Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon*, is to appear on American TV screens is actually true, but due to the success of another well known Japanese import, the long-legged super heroines are to get the same 'hamming up' treatment that the *Power Rangers* enjoyed. While it's safe to say that *Sailor Moon* isn't the most serious drama you're ever likely to see, you can expect to hear quite a few unintentional howlers as the Americans try to grapple with some of the more Japanese aspects of the show.

Manga Video aren't giving up on Japanese live action. After a not too successful start with *Ultraman* a while back, we got the promising but ultimately disappointing *Gunhed* and the terrible duo of *Tetsuo – The Iron Man* and *Tetsuo 2, Body Hammer*. They should have known all along that what we really wanted was that ol' grandaddy of the radioactive dinosaurs – *Godzilla*. Now we've got him, and not the old crumbly versions that Channel 4 run whenever they want to have a Monster Night, but the brand new extravaganzas that have been appearing in Japan over the past few years. This month kicks off with Big G's battle with the mother of all three-headed golden dragons in the 18th Godzilla film – *Godzilla Vs King Ghidorah*. Highly recommended.

Well, it's finally happened. Manga Entertainment have taken the plunge from just releasing other people's anime, to actually investing in a new production. And not doing things lightly, they've started off with a real cracker. Along with publishers Kodansha and mighty toy company Bandai, the anime version of *Masamune* (*Appleseed*) Shirow's *Ghost In The Shell* is well on its way to a November '95 release in Japan and over here soon after that. With a top staff including *Patlabor – The Movie*'s Mamoru Oishi as director and mecha designs from *Macross Plus*'s Shoji Kawamori, the tale of virtual law enforcers able to download themselves into high-powered assault suits can only be a winner.

Godzilla – enjoys a quality meat product.

COMPETITION WIN OH MY GODDESS COMPETITION WIN OH MY GODDESS

GET EACH 'OH MY GODDESS' TAPE THROUGH YOUR LETTERBOX, AS IT'S RELEASED

If you've read our glowing review of Anime Projects' new OAV series *Oh My Goddess*, this month, you'll know that we've all gone dewy-eyed and soppy over this excellent romantic comedy series about a college student who, instead of calling for a pizza, accidently dials up Belldandy, a Goddess who grants him one wish. Keiichi wishes she'd stay with him forever, and so their (not always steady) relationship begins.

Anime Projects have given us two sets of the five tapes that make up the *Oh My Goddess* series to give away in a competition. If you win, you'll receive a tape each time a new one is released. Well, it's certainly better than hunting them down in the video shops.

To be in the running for your very own *Goddess* series, just tell us:

'What subtle change of title did the series go through for its release in the West?'

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Super Play
30 Monmouth Street
Bath, Avon BA1 2BW

The closing date for entries is 30th April 1995.

FINAL FANTASY FORUM

We're overwhelmed! Your response to last month's column was amazing. You've supplied us with so many hints and tips that the Forum must expand next month to fit them all in...

Lock throws a switch here to reveal a secret room below.

The Fanatics' Tower in the World of Ruin can only be reached by Airship.

Groove to the Moog

Vincent Cook of London is just one of many moogle fans who wants to know: where can Mog learn his Water Rondo Dance power? The answer lies under the ocean, in the Serpent Trench. After chasing the thief called Lone Wolf to the precipice above Narshe, you can rescue Mog in the first half of the game. Place Mog in your party and head back to the Serpent Trench passage that cuts the ocean floor. This is the only place in which Water Rondo can be mastered, and as the Trench is destroyed in the middle of the game many players may have missed their chance.

Zeromus: pure hatred, and thus quite hard in a scrap.

But a secret passage leads to a Crystal Sword. Phew!

THE BIG ZERO

The mysterious duo Kel & Sar fear losing their sanity: they can't defeat Zeromus in *Final Fantasy II*. Fortunately, *Super Play* has the therapy. It's a common ailment, but the important thing to bear in mind here is that Zeromus doesn't attack until you use the crystal on him. So you have all the time you need to cast Wall, Speed, and any other protection or improvement spells on your party members beforehand. Don't bother using the crystal a second time – its only purpose is to make Zeromus take physical presence. The magic spells Nuke, Bahamut and Asura are most useful in battle (the latter elementals being unaffected by Wall spells). For mega damage, Ninja Edge can throw powerful swords like Excalibur and Spoon as if they were darts – you won't be needing them after this.

Just getting to Zeromus can wear you down, so rest at the lowest save point and use smoke bombs to avoid being sidetracked into minor conflicts on the last stretch.

Finally, a secret passage (not as visible to spot as the others!) in the moon's caverns leads to the powerful Crystal Sword. This is most effective against Zeromus.

PROFILES

EDGAR

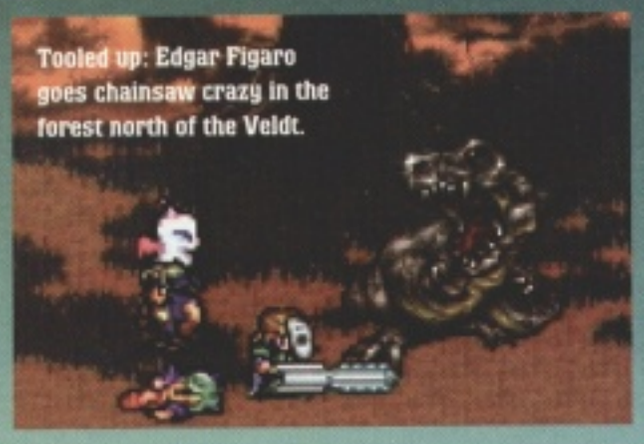
Prince, diplomat, rebel supporter, womaniser; the toss of a coin decided that Edgar Figaro ascended to the throne of Figaro, whilst his brother Mash (US: Sabin) left the family castle to travel the world.

A masterful inventor and engineer, Edgar can use a range of 'Tools' in battle. You should come across the Auto Crossbow, Noise Blaster, Bio Blaster, Flash, Debilitator and Drill in the normal course of play, but two special tools exist.

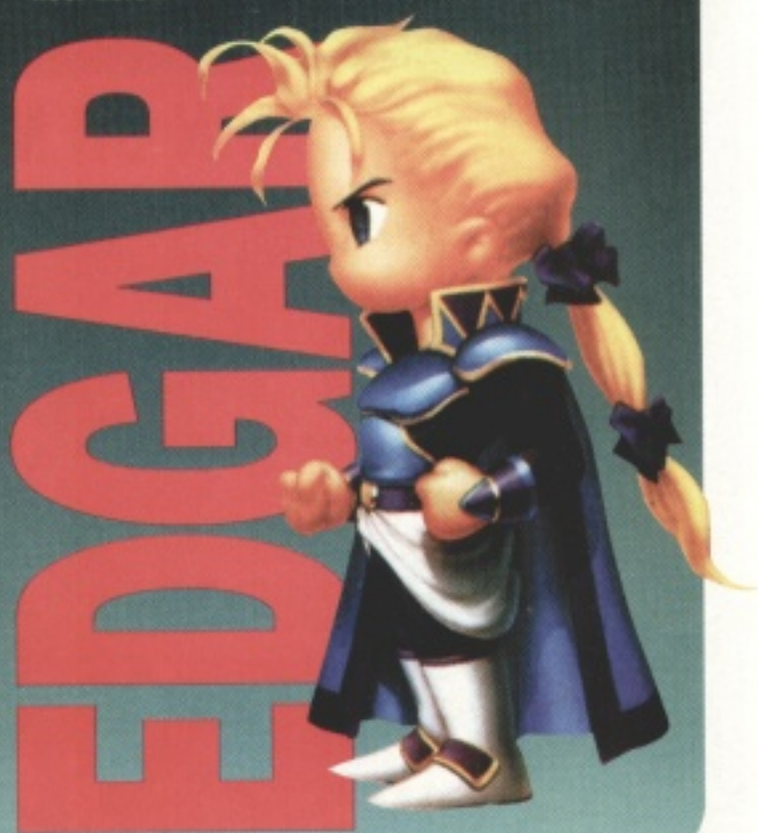
Last month's clues should have enabled you to find the Chainsaw hidden in Zozo.

Sometimes, when using Chainsaw, Edgar wears a 'Jason' face-mask: this indicates a random attempt to dispatch his opponent in one blow.

The last Tool, Air Anchor, is hidden in the Tower inhabited by the Cult of Kefka. Enter the first door on your way up the Tower and look for a switch to the right of the chest. When it clicks you'll find that a secret door has appeared outside on the floor below.



Tooled up: Edgar Figaro goes chainsaw crazy in the forest north of the Veldt.



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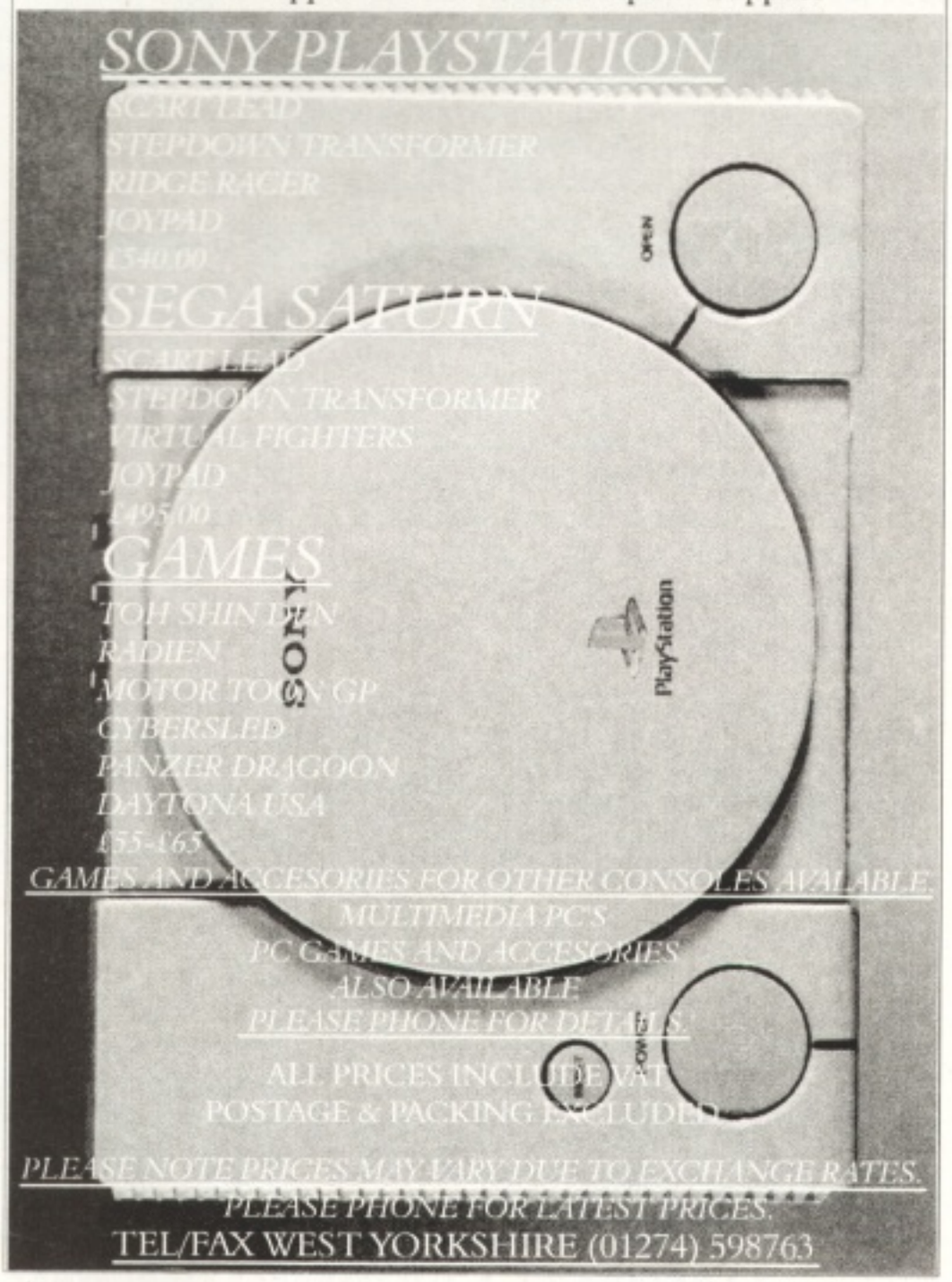

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ISSUE 32 ON SALE THURSDAY, 4 MAY 1995

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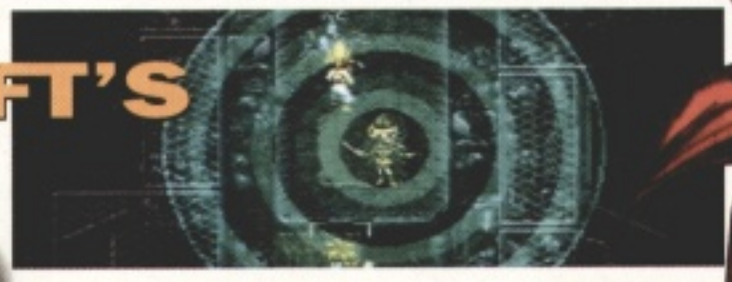
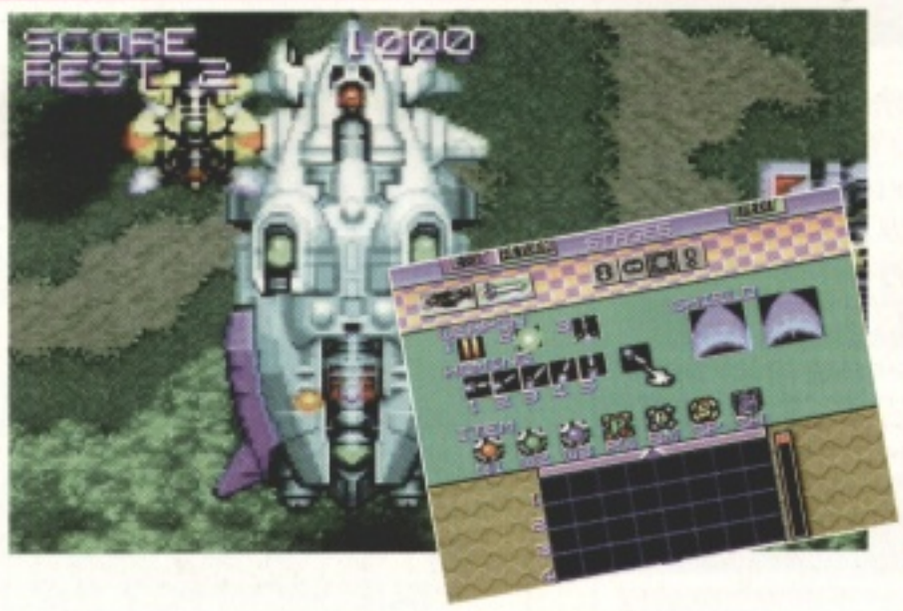


SQUARESOFT'S CHRONO TRIGGER クロノ・トリガー

One of the most acclaimed software houses in the world is still working exclusively for your Super Nintendo. Its games line-up is regarded with envy by its rivals, setting new standards in 16-bit programming and encouraging fierce competition. The company in question is Square of Japan: its latest release, *Chrono Trigger*, is the biggest game in its history. Combining elements of *Secret of Mana* and *Final Fantasy VI*, *Chrono Trigger* may just prove to be the cartridge title of 1995, on any system. But can Square's developers continue to surpass their own high level of quality? Prepare to be amazed...

MAKE YOUR OWN SNES GAME!

Fed up with the dismal efforts of professional software houses? Think you could do better? Now you can, thanks to Japanese developer Athena. *Super Play* takes apart *Dezaemon*, the Shoot-'em-up Construction Kit for your Super Nintendo. Design the sprites, write the music, implement the effects: never before have you had so much control over what you play on your own console.



THE SUPER PLAY INTERVIEW

He's the genius behind a video game character more famous than Mickey Mouse. We talk to Shigeru Miyamoto, the creator of *Mario*, *Zelda* and *Pilotwings*, and ask him about Nintendo's Next Big Thing. What has he been working on, behind the closed doors of Japan's biggest game company?

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THE SUPER QUIZ ANSWERS

Think you can do any better? Then don't sit there complaining, prove it! Send your questions to the Editor and, if they're any good, we may even print them and dedicate the quiz to you.

EASY

1. Three. *The Addams Family*, *Puggsley's Scavenger Hunt* and *Addams Family Values* are all by Ocean.

2. The late Raul Julia, who played Gomez and M Bison respectively in the movie versions.

3. *Sabre Wulf* – being the title of a game by Rare's previous incarnation, Ultimate Play The Game.

MEDIUM

1. Kirby, that big pink ball of fun.

2. Pac Man. He appeared in Nintendo's *Pac Attack* and Mindscape's *Pac-In-Time*.

3. *Pac Attack* was a thinly-disguised version of *Cosmo Gang*: The Puzzle.

HARD

1. The Yakuza.

2. Shinjuku.

3. Moon Cresta.

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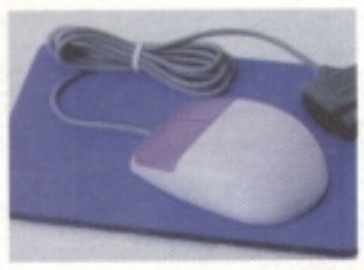

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